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POETICAL WORKS

OF

GEOFF. CHAUCER.

IN FOURTEEN VOLUMES.

THE MISCELLANEOUS PIECES

From *Urry's* Edition 1721,

THE CANTERBURY TALES

From *Tyrwhitt's* Edition 1775.

Grete well CHAUCER whan ye mete----
Of ditees and of ſonges glade,
The which he---made,
The londe fulfilled is over all. GOWER.

My maiſter CHAUCER---chiefe poete of Bretayne----
Whom all this londe ſchulde of ryght preferre,
Sith of our langage he was the lode-ſterre----
That made firſt to dyſtylle and rayne
The gold dewe dropys of ſpeche and eloquence
Into our tunge thrugh his excellence. LYDGATE.

The honour of Engliſh tong is dede----
My mayſter CHAUCER, floure of eloquence,
Mirrour of fructuous entendement,
Univerſel fadir in ſcience----
This londis verray treſour and richeſſe----
The firſte fynder of our fayre langage. OCCLEVE.

Venerabill CHAUCER, principall poete but pere,
Hevinly trumpet, orlege and regulere,
In eloquence balme, condict and diall,
Mylky fountane, clere ſtrand, and rois riall,
Of freſche endite throw Albioun iland braid. DOUGLAS.

O reverend CHAUCER! roſe of rethouris all,
As in oure toung flour imperial
That raiſe in Brittane evir, quha reidis right
Thou beiris of Makers the triumphs royall,
The freſche enamilt termes celeſtiall:
This mater couth haif illuminit full bricht,
Was thou nocht, of our Inglis all the light,
Surmounting every toung terreſtriall
As far as Mayi's morrow dois midnicht. DUNBAR.

VOL. I.

EDINBURG:

AT THE Apollo Preſs, BY THE MARTINS.

Anno 1782.

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THE POETICAL WORKS OF GEOFFREY CHAUCER.

VOL. I.

CONTAINING HIS

LIFE, and PREFACES, INTRODUCTORY DISCOURSES, ACCOUNT OF HIS WORKS, TESTIMONIES OF AUTHORS CONCERNING HIM,

&c. &c. &c.

But natheles certain
I can right now no thrifty Tale ſain,
But CHAUCER, (though he can but lewedly
On metres and on riming craftily)
Hath ſayd hem in ſwiche Engliſh as he can
Of olde time, as knoweth many a man;
And if he have not ſayd hem, leve brother,
In o book, he hath ſayd hem in another----
Who ſo that wol his large Volume ſeke. TALES, *ver.* 4465.

Dan CHAUCER, well of Engliſh undefil'd,
On Fame's eternal bead-roll worthy to be fil'd----
Old Dan Geffrey, in whoſe gentle ſpright
The pure well-head of poetry did dwell----
He whilſt he lived was the ſoveraigne head
Of ſhepherds all----- - SPENSER.

Old CHAUCER, like the morning ſtar,
To us diſcovers day from far;
His light thoſe miſts and clouds diſſolv'd
Which our dark nation long involv'd;
But he deſcending to the ſhades
Darkneſs again the age invades. DENHAM.

CHAUCER, him who firſt with harmony inform'd
The language of our fathers--- His legends blithe
He ſang of love or knighthood, or the wiles
Of homely life, thro' each eſtate and age
The faſhions and the follies of the world
With cunning hand portraying-----
Him who in times------
Dark and untaught began with charming verſe
To tame the rudeneſs of his native land. AKENSIDE.

EDINBURG:

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THE LIFE OF

GEOFFREY CHAUCER.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER, the Father of our English poets, and the first great improver and reformer of our language, flourished in the 14th century, and as he justly obtained the highest admiration amongst his contemporaries, so his memory has ever since been highly honoured. One would imagine from this that every historical circumstance relating to him, or at least those of the greatest moment, should be well preserved, and be perfectly clear, which however is so far from being the case that nothing can hitherto be certainly determined concerning his descent, or so much as who was his father. Leland says that he was of a noble stock, Pitts that he was the son of a knight, Speght that his father was a vintner, Hearne that he was a merchant, and the fifth and last opinion, which is the best, is, that nothing can be said with any tolerable assurance of his family at all, but that there is somewhat more probability of his being the son of a gentleman rather than of a tradesman*.

* *Rather than of a tradesman.*] It is a point well agreed amongst our ancient authors that the French sirname of this family, which was variously written, as for instance Chaucier, Chaucierris, Chaussier, Chausir, *&c.* signified a shoemaker; but notwithstanding this it is very well known that the founder of this family in England was a Norman chief that came over with William the Conquerour, as appears by the roll of Battle-Abbey; and in succeeding times there were several persons of note

The place of his birth is as much difputed, but however may be determined with greater appear-

of this name mentioned in our records. In the reign of King John there was one le Chaufir, as appears by the records in The Tower; and in the reign of Henry III. one Elias Chaucefir, who in the reign following, *viz.* Edward I. had a grant of ten fhillings from the Treafury; there was alfo one John Chaucer, of whom King Edward I. heard a complaint for a thoufand pounds: but all this gives us no kind of certainty in refpect to our Author's family at all. Leland contents himfelf with hinting that he was of a genteel extraction, *nobili loco natus*, are his words; and it is faid that he is faithfully copied by Bale; but this is to be underftood of the later editions of his book, for in the firft he calls him Sir Geoffrey Chaucer Knight, and fays nothing of his family at all, afterwards he met with Leland's book, and abridged his account of him. John Pitts is very clear that he was of an exceeding good family, and not only a knight himfelf but his father a knight before him; but his authority goes for little, more efpecially with thofe that know him beft. Mr. Speght is of opinion that one Richard Chaucer was his father, who was a vintner at the corner of Kirton-Lane, and dying in 1348 left his houfe, tavern, and ftock, to the church of St. Mary Aldermary, where he was buried. This paffed currently with Fuller, and perhaps the better becaufe it furnifhed him with a very filly jeft; "His father," fays he, "was a vintner in London, and I have heard his arms quarrelled at being "*argent* and *gules*, ftrangely contrived, and hard to be blazoned: "fome more wits have made it the dafhing of white and red "wine (the parents of our ordinary claret) as nicking his father's profeffion." Againft this opinion, however, their lie two exceptions that folider heads than his have not been able to get over; the firft is that there was fomething very unnatural in this vintner's leaving all his eftate to the church while his fon was at the univerfity; and the fecond that Chaucer fhould never complain of this, or, for any thing that we can difcover, feel the effects of it, fince it is evident enough that in his youth he lived at a rate that could not have been fupported without

ance of truth, for though Bale fays he was a Berkfhire man, and Pitts would entitle Oxfordfhire to his birth, yet if we may rely upon what he tells us himfelf (Teft. of Love) it is much more likely that he drew his firft breath in the city of London; and that he had a great intereft amongft its inhabitants is a thing as certain as that it drew upon him many misfortunes,

a fortune. The induftrious Mr. Hearne thinks it probable his father was a merchant of London; but the laft writer of his life thinking that father not good enough for him hath found him out a better, one Sir John Chaucer, for which he has no other evidence than that fuch a man lived at a time when our poet might poffibly have been his fon. I muft confefs I think he was of a good family, and that for various reafons, which becaufe I do not know they have been taken notice of before I will mention as briefly as I can. Firft then, his education fpeaks him a gentleman bred at both the Univerfities, travelled through feveral countries, and at laft a ftudent in the Temple, where it is reported that he was fined two fhillings for beating a friar in Fleetftreet. Next, his poft at court fhews him to have been a gentleman, for birth was much ftood upon in thofe days, and young men of the beft quality were the King's pages. Thirdly, this is confirmed by his marriage, which fo proud a man as John of Gaunt would not have admitted if he had been of a mean defcent, much lefs have recommended him to his wife, and thereby made him the uncle-in-law of his own children. Fourthly, his writings fhew him a gentleman, for they are all written with fuch freedom and fpirit as muft have expofed him to great envy if he had not been a gentleman, and which he would probably have appeafed by fome reafonable apology. Laftly, the company he kept, and the refpect that was conftantly paid him, feem the cleareft teftimonies of this, which with the reft I fubmit to the decifion of the intelligent reader.

notwithstanding which his having that interest seems to be a corroborating proof of his being a citizen's son*.

* *Of his being a citizen's son.*] It seems to have been a doubt with Leland whether Oxfordshire or Berkshire produced this great man, but he thought he had reason to think that he was born in one of those counties. If Berkshire was to be preferred, then Dunnington would bid the fairest for it, which was certainly Chaucer's seat; but then it seems to be no less certain that he purchased it from Sir Richard Adderbury. Pitts affirms roundly that he was born at Woodstock, and Camden, speaking of that place, says, that having nothing in it else remarkable it boasts of having produced our English Homer, Geoffrey Chaucer: but he was too knowing a man to credit this; he knew the reason of it to be that Chaucer had a house there, and Ewelm and Hocknorton in the same county were also belonging to his family, and might therefore with as much justice as Woodstock put in a claim to his birth. But Chaucer himself seems to have determined the point as clearly as man could do, for speaking of the troubles that had happened in this place he says, "The "city of London, that is to me so dear and sweet, in which I "was forth-grown; and more kindly love have I to that place "than any other on earth, as every kindly creature hath full "appetite to that place of his kindly engendruer," &c. and therefore Camden very justly takes occasion, speaking of another poet, to affirm that London was our Author's birthplace: "Edmund Spenser," says he, "a Londoner, was so smiled "on by the Muses at his birth that he excelled all the English "poets that went before him, if we except only his fellow-ci-"tizen Chaucer." It may seem a little difficult to reconcile what is said in this note to what has been advanced in the former, and yet it may be done tolerably well, for though we now consider a citizen of London as a trader of course, yet in the times when Chaucer lived men of great quality and distinction resided in the city, where the court was also kept, and therefore he might very well be in this sense the son of an inhabitant of London, and still his father might not be either merchant or vintner, but in some post about the court; and this in

The time of his birth is pretty well fixed, for moſt of the writers who mention it agree that it was in the ſecond year of Edward III. A. D. 1328.

Here again we fall into the dark, for as to his earlier years we know not where or how they were ſpent; but as ſoon as he was fit for academical ſtudies he was ſent to Cambridge, where he gave early teſtimonies of his abilities by ſeveral elegies and ſonnets, as well as by a poem called The Court of Love, which he compoſed when he was about eighteen, and which carries in it very pregnant proofs of ſkill and learning, as well as quickneſs of wit and great ſtrength of genius †. It is

ſo dark a matter, and which has employed ſo many learned pens, without letting in much light upon it, ſeems the moſt probable account of the matter: for in that diſcourſe in which he ſpeaks of London as his birthplace he very clearly confeſſes that he had been but too deeply engaged in the popular diſturbances that happened there, through his attachment to his patron the Duke of Lancaſter, which ſhows the intereſt he had among the people; and yet he affirms that in what he did he had no evil intention, much leſs meant to throw all things into confuſion; and offers it as a reaſon why he ſhould be believed in declaring this, that he was a native of London, and loved it better than any place upon earth, as every creature naturally does the place from which it ſprings. After clearing up theſe points as far as poſſible we ſhall be more brief in our remarks upon other points of this hiſtory, though a large and full life of Chaucer ſeems to be a work ſtill wanting to the learned world after all the pains that has been hitherto taken about it.

† *And great ſtrength of genius.*] The moſt certain accounts we have of Chaucer are thoſe taken from his own writings, in which there are a great variety of circumſtances that occur not

not by any means certain in what college or hall of that univerſity he ſtudied, but it is conjectured, and

in any of the ancient relations of his life, inſomuch that it is very doubtful whether we ſhould ever have heard any thing of his being a ſtudent at Cambridge if he had not left us that particular himſelf. In like manner it might have been preſumed, but it could hardly have been proved, that his Court of Love was not his firſt performance, or at leaſt his firſt performance that made any great figure. But from the peruſal of this poem we learn from himſelf that he had written many things before in honour of the deity of Love. Indeed the poem itſelf ſpeaks it probable, for though we have a very high idea of the natural genius of Chaucer, yet it would be impoſſible to perſuade any judge of poetry that this was his firſt eſſay, for not only the ſtructure of the poem manifeſts an extraordinary ſkill in that kind of writing, but the harmony of his numbers, even at this diſtance of time, ſufficiently ſhew that they could not fall from the pen of an unpractiſed poet. It is generally believed, upon the credit I apprehend of the rubrick placed at the head of this performance, that it was written in imitation of The Romant of the Roſe; but I muſt confeſs I am not very well ſatiſfied of that, and ſhould rather be of opinion that our Author compoſed it after the manner of thoſe Italian poems that were then ſo generally eſteemed, and for which the famous Francis Petrarch had been crowned ſome years before with great ſolemnity at Rome. The honours which that celebrated poet acquired, and which he had never acquired but in an age of the greateſt gallantry, excited all who had any turn that way to emulate his performances. We may very plainly perceive in this work of Chaucer's that he meant to make his entrance by it into the region of Parnaſſus, and boldly reſolved, on the ſtrength of his own judgment as well as of his genius, to declare himſelf a poet, and put himſelf that way into the road to fame. If this had not been his intention he would have ſcarce written The Court of Love, the ground of which poem is to ſhew that it was a tribunal to which every man owed obedience, which ſooner or later he was obliged to pay. As for

not without ſome ſhew of reaſon, that it might be in Solere's Hall, which he has ſo particularly and humorouſly deſcribed in his ſtory of The Miller of Trompington.

He removed from Cambridge, for reaſons which we find no where aſſigned, to the univerſity of Oxford, and completed his ſtudies there, ſome ſay at Canterbury College, which however is improbable, ſince it was not founded till Chaucer was thirty-five years of age, others in Merton College, which is more likely; for though his name does not appear among the celebrated members of it at that time, yet we find moſt of his contemporaries, as Strode, Occleve, *&c.* were of that college. After a conſiderable ſtay here, and a ſtrict application to the publick lectures of the univerſity, he became, as Leland tells us, a ready logician, a ſmooth rhetorician, a pleaſant poet, a grave

himſelf, he profeſſes that he was ſummoned to do ſuit and ſervice at the age of eighteen, which affords him an opportunity of deſcribing the Court, the manner of its proceedings, and the ſtatutes of Love by which thoſe proceedings are regulated. This poem is very long, conſiſting of upwards of fourteen hundred verſes, and concludes with the feſtival of Love, which with great elegance our poet fixes upon the 1ſt of May, and makes it celebrated by the birds: yet this part of the poem is the moſt exceptionable of any, and ſhows what a ſtrange taſte prevailed in that age, for in this feſtival not only the hymns of the church but the Pſalms themſelves are very ſcandalouſly profaned, and applied to the god of Love and his mother, which ſhows the bad conſequences that naturally flow from ſuperſtitious devotion.

philofopher, an ingenious mathematician, and a holy divine. That he was a great mafter in aftronomy is plain from his Difcourfes of the Aftrolabe; that he was verfed in the Hermetick philofophy appears by his Tale of the Chanon's Yeoman; his knowledge in divinity is evident from his Parfon's Tale; and his philofophy from The Teftament of Love.

After he left this univerfity he travelled abroad through France and the Low Countries in order to fee the world, and to improve the knowledge which he had acquired from books; but when he went abroad or at what time he returned are circumftances not eafy to be determined. Yet fure there is a probability that he fpent not many years out of his own country, fince the beft writers feem to be well fatisfied that after his return he entered himfelf of the Middle-Temple, and became a ftudent there of the municipal laws of this land. Of this learning having received fome tincture he betook himfelf to the court, which was indeed the place in the world fitteft for a man of his accomplifhments to thrive in. His firft employment there was in quality of the King's Page, in thofe times a very honourable office, as it gave near and frequent accefs to the royal prefence; but one would imagine this was not a poft to which any but a young man could be advanced upon his coming to court, and therefore it feems moft confiftent with truth

to believe that Geoffrey Chaucer could not at his admittance exceed thirty †.

† *Could not at* that time *exceed thirty.*] We have intimated in the text that our Author feems to have owed his admittance into the King's fervice in quality of Page, which in the Latin of thofe times was called *valettus* or *valectus*, an honour that young noblemen of the firft rank were glad to accept, to the favour of the King's fon John of Gaunt, afterwards Duke of Lancafter, of which no notice is taken by any of thofe who have hitherto collected the memoirs of his life. Yet we do not affert this without authority, for it appears by a poem of his called Chaucer's Dream, firft printed in the year 1597, that he was very deep in this young prince's amorous fecrets, for that poem is an allegorical hiftory of the loves of John of Gaunt and Blanch of Lancafter, daughter of Henry Duke of Lancafter, which from this very poem it appears were managed with the utmoft fecrefy, till by a long train of intrigues and folicitations all the obftacles in the way of this match were got over, and with the help of the King's confent and the Pope's difpenfation they were married in May 1359, which as it was the firft introduction to John of Gaunt's vaft power and greatnefs, fo it feems to have been the beginning of our Author's fortunes at court; at leaft it is certain that the knowledge he had of this affair was what made him equally the favourite of the Duke of Lancafter and of the Duchefs Blanch, who as the higheft teftimony of her friendfhip gave him the fifter of her favourite lady in marriage, which is alfo intimated at the clofe of this poem. But this is quite a different thing from another under the fame title that in the old manufcripts is and ought to be entitled The Book of the Duchefs, written not upon her marriage but upon her death, and this being wrote in the manner of a vifion, and the other not being difcovered, came to be called Chaucer's Dream, becaufe that title appeared in fome old lifts of his Works. As the credit of the Duke of Lancafter increafed with his father, Chaucer's alfo rofe in a like proportion, for he continued fteady to his patron to the laft hour of that duke's life; and indeed confidering his alliance

At this time the English court was the moſt gay and ſplendid in Europe. Edward III. a prince equally diſtinguiſhed by civil and martial virtues, ſat then upon the throne, bleſſed with an illuſtrious conſort, by whom he had a numerous poſterity. His many victories had rendered him famous abroad, and his moderation and clemency, his reverence for the laws, and his kindneſs for his people, made him beloved at home, ſo that our Chronicles boaſt of few reigns more glorious, and of none brighter, than his. Among other great qualities with which this famous monarch was endued his love of learning and learned men was not the leaſt conſpicuous, and therefore we need not wonder that our Author, who was continually giving ſome ſpecimen or other of the vivacity of his parts, wrought himſelf into high favour, inſomuch that it appears that he was a conſtant attendant on the court, and when it was at Woodſtock reſided at a ſquare ſtone houſe near the park-gate, which ſtill retains his name; and well indeed it may, ſince being conſecrated in his poems the whole country round about is become, in reſpect to Engliſhmen, a kind of claſſick ground †.

as well as his obligations we need not at all wonder that he did: but after ſaying all this it will be very proper to add, that notwithſtanding his fidelity to his patron he did not go all lengths with him, but kept exactly within the bounds of loyalty to his prince as well as thoſe of duty to his benefactor.

† *A kind of claſſick ground.*] In order to juſtify this we need only obſerve that many of the rural deſcriptions that occur in his Works are taken from Woodſtock-Park, of which he tells

But beſides his employment about the perſon of his prince our poet took pains to advance his fortune by

us that it was a park walled with green ſtone, that being the firſt park walled in England, and not many years before his time. In moſt of his pieces where he deſigns an imaginary ſcene he certainly copies it from a real landſcape; ſo in his Cuckoo and Nightingale the morning walk he takes was ſuch as at this day may be traced from his houſe through part of the park, and down by the brook into the vale under Blenheim-Caſtle, as certainly as we may aſſert that maples inſtead of phyllereas were the ornaments round the bower, which place he likewiſe deſcribes in his Dream as a white caſtle ſtanding upon a hill, the ſcene in that poem being laid in Woodſtock-Park. When diſengaged from publick affairs his time was entirely ſpent in ſtudying and walking: ſo agreeable to him was this exerciſe, that he ſays he preferred it to all other ſports and diverſions. He lived within himſelf, neither deſirous to hear nor buſy to concern himſelf with the affairs of his neighbours. His courſe of living was temperate and regular; he went to reſt with the ſun and roſe before it, and by that means enjoyed the pleaſures of the better part of the day, his morning walk and freſh contemplations. This gave him the advantage of deſcribing the morning in ſo lively a manner as he does every where in his Works; the ſpringing ſun glows warm in his lines, and the fragrant air blows cool in his deſcriptions; we ſmell the ſweets of the bloomy haws, and hear the muſick of the feathered choir, whenever we take a foreſt walk with him. The hour of the day is not eaſier to be diſcovered from the reflection of the ſun in Titian's paintings than in Chaucer's morning landſcapes. 'Tis true thoſe deſcriptions are ſometimes too long, and, as it is before obſerved, when he takes thoſe early rambles he almoſt tires his reader with following him, and ſeldom knows how to get out of a foreſt when once entered into it; but how advantageous this beautiful extravagance is moſt of his ſucceſſors well know, who have very plentifully lopt off his exuberant beauties, and placed them as the chief ornaments of their own writings.

attaching himſelf to the ſervice of John of Gaunt Duke of Lancaſter, by whom and by his Ducheſs Blanch, a lady equally remarkable for her wit and virtue, he was exceedingly beloved; nor was it long before he became part of their family alſo. It happened thus. This Ducheſs entertained in her ſervice one Catharine Rouet, daughter of Sir Payne or Pagan Rouet, a native of Hainault, and Guien King at Arms for that country, who was afterwards married to Sir Hugh Swynford, a knight of Lincoln. He lived not long after their marriage, and upon his deceaſe this lady returned into the Duke's family, and was appointed governeſs of his children. She had a ſiſter whoſe name was Philippa, a great favourite likewiſe with the Duke and Ducheſs, and by them therefore, as a mark of their great eſteem, recommended to Chaucer for a wife. He married her about the year 1360, when he was in the flower of his age, and, as appears from a picture of him taken about that time, one of the handſomeſt perſons about the court, of a complexion fair and beautiful, his lips very red and full, his ſize of a juſt proportion, his air very graceful and majeſtick. We live at too great a diſtance of time to be able to penetrate with certainty into the true motives of our Author's match, but ſure there is a great probability that he was not unacquainted with the tenderneſs which his patron the Duke of Lancaſter had for the Lady Swynford, by whom he had ſe-

veral children, who were afterwards legitimated by act of parliament. Yet this alliance was not the only tie he had upon that prince, one of the most ambitious and artful men of his time, and always embarked in some state-intrigue or other, and therefore above all things fond of having men of parts and literature about him, of whom he might make use as occasion offered, and in which capacity as there was none more able, so it appears there were none did him greater service than Chaucer.

Being thus supported we need not wonder that his fortunes made a very quick progress at court, and accordingly we find very many marks of his master King Edward's kindness towards him; as for instance, in the 41st year of his reign he granted him an annuity of twenty marks *per annum* out of the Exchequer. How mean soever such a pension may seem now it was then very considerable, and in Chaucer's case was still the more valuable as being an earnest of future favours, for not long after we find him Gentleman of the King's Privy-Chamber, and by that title the King granted to him, by letters patents dated in the 45th year of his reign, the further sum of twenty marks *per annum* during his life.

In this station he did not long continue, being next year made Shieldbearer to the King, a title at that time, though now extinct, of great honour, such persons being always next the King's person, and gene-

rally upon ſignal victories rewarded with military honours. Neither were theſe all the inſtances he received of the King's attention to and confidence in him, for in the very ſame year, and by the ſame title, we find him commiſſioned, in conjunction with other perſons, to treat with the republick of Genoa; and accordingly thither he went, and actually managed a negotiation, concerning the ſubject of which thoſe who have written our Author's life make not the leaſt mention, but ſeem to treat it as a matter, at this diſtance of time, altogether inexplicable. But it may from the hiſtory of that prince's reign be very probably inferred that Chaucer was ſent to Genoa to hire ſhips for the King's navy; for in thoſe times though we frequently made great naval armaments, yet we had but very few ſhips of our own, and this defect was ſupplied by hiring them from the free ſtates either in Germany or Italy. In this negotiation our Author ſucceeded ſo well that upon his return home he received new marks of his royal maſter's favour, for by letters patents dated at Windſor the 23d of April in the 48th year of his reign, his Majeſty granted him a pitcher of wine daily in the Port of London, to be delivered by the Butler of England; and very ſoon after he was made Comptroller of the Cuſtoms in the Port of London for wool, wool-fells, and hides, with a proviſo that he ſhould perſonally execute that office, and keep the accounts of it with his own hand. As this was a

very lucrative so it was a very reputable employment likewise, and as Chaucer was enriched by the profits of his post, so his reputation was very much increased by that diligence and integrity with which he discharged it. He values himself, as he had reason to do, very much upon his conduct in this office, which he affirms was never liable to any kind of imputation. And indeed it is highly probable that what he has delivered upon this subject is strictly true, for in the latter end of King Edward's reign there were great frauds and embezzlements committed in the Customs, which by prosecutions were brought to publick view, but we do not find that in these Chaucer's name was so much as mentioned. About a year after he was in possession of this office the King made him a grant of the lands and body of Sir Edmund Staplegate, son of Sir Edmund Staplegate of Kent, in ward, for which he received one hundred and four pounds; and other pecuniary advantages he had, which enabled him to raise altogether an income of one thousand pounds *per annum*, which was in these days a prodigious sum, and might well enable him to live, as he says he did, with dignity in office, and with good will amongst his neighbours. But as all these benefits arose chiefly from the favour in which he stood with the potent and ambitious Duke of Lancaster, so he became daily more and more involved in the political intrigues of that active and ambitious prince. It is suggested by many of our

hiſtorians that this duke had caſt a longing eye upon the crown, and it is attributed to this that about the time our Author was ſent to Genoa the King declared, in full parliament, the young Prince Richard, the only ſurviving ſon of Edward the Black Prince, heir-apparent to the crown. But there ſeems to be a plainer and more natural reaſon for the King's taking this ſtep, in which none more readily concurred than the Duke of Lancaſter, and that was his own and his ſon's going abroad to carry on the war in France, upon which occaſion it was requiſite that the ſucceſſion ſhould be ſettled, and therefore the young Prince Richard was not only declared heir-apparent, but the government of the kingdom was, nominally at leaſt, intruſted with him during the abſence of his grandfather, his father, and uncles. But what ſeems to be a ſtronger proof of the Duke of Lancaſter's innocence in this reſpect was his marrying, upon the deceaſe of his Ducheſs Blanch, the Lady Conſtantia, daughter of Peter the Cruel King of Caſtile and Leon, in whoſe right upon the deceaſe of her father he aſſumed thoſe royal titles. This muſt be allowed to be a mark of his ambition, and of his inclination to be a king, but at the ſame time it is a proof that he had another crown in view than that of England, and therefore to this we may well aſcribe that device of his, of an eagle endeavouring with his bill to undo a footlock, which many of our writers, with more malignity than judgment,

have conſtrued into a kind of treaſon. It is however true that after the deceaſe of his eldeſt brother, Edward the Black Prince, he was aſſociated by his father in the government, and had the principal direction of publick affairs, which conſidering his age, his experience, and his very near relation to the crown, may be looked upon as a thing rather natural than extraordinary.

In this happy ſeaſon of his life, when he enjoyed all the bleſſings this world could afford, Chaucer compoſed moſt of thoſe gay and lively pieces which were ſo much adapted to the humour of theſe times, and to that romantick ſpirit of love and fighting which in thoſe days were ſo much in vogue, and by which he acquired ſo great and ſo extenſive a reputation for his wit and for his capacity in writing *. But it was not

* *And for his capacity in writing.*] We have already mentioned ſome of the performances of our Author while a very young man, and alſo ſome of thoſe pieces that he wrote to compliment the Duke of Lancaſter and his Ducheſs. We will here take an opportunity of giving an account of ſome other pieces of his that were wrote within the time of his greateſt proſperity. The Complaint of Mary Magdalen, taken from Origen, was tranſlated either before or ſoon after his coming to court, perhaps to oblige ſome pious lady of thoſe times, as he wrote that which is called Chaucer's A, B, C, for the uſe of the Ducheſs Blanch. The Complaint of the Black Knight was penned in honour of John of Gaunt's courtſhip of that lady, and is as elegant and harmonious a poem as any of our Author's compoſure, ſo that it is reaſonable to believe he took extraordinary pains about it; and perhaps it would be no unreaſonable conjecture if we ſhould ſuppoſe that it was written upon his firſt admiſſion to the intimacy of that great prince, who is repre-

long before he found himſelf obliged to turn his thoughts to graver ſubjects, for his patron the Duke

preſented under the character of the Black Knight. The Houſe of Fame is alſo a moſt admirable performance, as well in the conſtruction of the fable as in the eaſe and happineſs of its execution, of which there cannot be a higher teſtimony than Mr. Pope's borrowing from thence the model of his Temple of Fame, which will probably be eſteemed as long as there is either taſte or poetry in this nation. The Aſſembly of Fowls was written while he was at court, and before the death of King Edward's queen Philippa; and ſo was his tale of The Cuckoo and the Nightingale, in which, as was obſerved in the preceding note, the ſcene is viſibly laid in Woodſtock-Park. He likewiſe wrote abundance of elegies, poems, or ballads, in honour of Margaret Counteſs of Pembroke, and other ladies of the court; and as it is natural to ſuppoſe that he was not the only perſon who wrote things of this kind, ſo by an accident common enough to great men, all of thoſe pieces which have ſurvived the injuries of time are come down to us under the name of Chaucer, though it might be very eaſily proved that they are none of his. The poem of Troilus and Creſeide was written in the former part of his life, and tranſlated, as he ſays, from Lollius, an hiſtoriographer of Urbano in Italy. He did not however content himſelf with making a cloſe tranſlation of his author, but, on the contrary, added many things of his own, and borrowed alſo from others, more eſpecially his friend Petrarch, whatever he judged might render it acceptable to his reader. That diſcourſe of Predeſtination which he has inſerted in the fourth book is entirely his own; and from it, and from what he has delivered upon the ſame ſubject in The Nun's Prieſt's Tale, the very learned Sir Henry Savile thought that he was no ſtranger to Archbiſhop Bradwardine's learned book *de Cauſa Dei* publiſhed at that time. Sir Francis Kinaſton, who tranſlated this poem into Latin rhymes, in his manuſcript notes upon it ſays, that it was not improbably conjectured that Chaucer, in writing The Lives and Loves of Troilus and Creſeide, glanced at ſome private perſons in the court of King Edward III. and

of Lancaster having espoused the cause of Wickliffe, whom the clergy considered as a heretick, Chaucer inclined the same way, and turned the edge of his satire against lazy monks, ignorant priests, and the insolence of such as belonged to ecclesiastical courts, with extraordinary success. Yet it does not at all appear that he was an enemy to religion, or even to that of the church of Rome, but rather the contrary, for he speaks very submissively of her doctrines, and bestows high characters upon such of the clergy as acted suitably to their calling; so that it was the ill men, who brought religion into contempt, and prostituted their own function in the vilest manner, that felt the severity of Chaucer's Muse, and not priests in general, or the Christian faith, for the former he highly revered, and the latter he firmly believed, as his writings plainly shew *. But how much soever Wickliffe's

did not follow Homer, Dares, Dictys, or any historian of those times. However, says he, Chaucer has taken the liberty of his own inventions; he hath made an admirable and inimitable epick poem, describing in Troilus a complete knight in arms and courtship, and a faithful and constant lover, and in Creseide a most beautiful and coy lady, which being once overcome yields to the frailty of her sex. We shall have occasion hereafter to speak more largely of this worthy person's performance, and of the pains he took to illustrate Chaucer, in which he equalled at least, if not exceeded, all who have spent their time in doing justice to this great poet.

* *As his writings plainly shew.*] The true design of our Author was not to expose or abuse the clergy from a dislike to their order, but, quite the contrary, to amend and to reform

doctrines might prevail, or Chaucer's writings pleaſe, among the better ſort of people and in the country, them; and it was with this view that he wrote many pieces and tranſlated others, that they might plainly perceive how much religion ſuffered by the monſtrous irregularities in their behaviour. As for inſtance, The Romant of the Roſe is a tranſlation from the French. This poem was begun by William de Lorris, and continued by John Meung, commonly called Clopinel, both famous French poets in their time. It ſeems to have been tranſlated by Chaucer while he was at court, and about the time of the riſe of Wickliffe's opinions, it conſiſting of violent invectives againſt the religious orders. It is left imperfect at the end, and there are ſome lacunas in other places of it. It may not be amiſs to obſerve here that the original author of this work, William de Lorris, died in the year 1260, at the age of twenty-ſix, and advanced no great way therein, but forty years afterwards it was finiſhed and publiſhed by John de Meung when he was in his twenty-fourth year. He was a man of ſenſe and learning, well verſed in divinity, philoſophy, chymiſtry, aſtronomy, and other ſciences, but was a violent enemy to bad prieſts and bad women: he is ſuppoſed to have died about the year 1365. This work is ſtill much eſteemed in France, where it has run through many editions, but the beſt, which was publiſhed in Holland, is of a very freſh date. Beſides this Chaucer is affirmed by Leland and other ancient writers to have been the author of The Plowman's Tale, which bears very hard upon the vices of the clergy both ſecular and regular; and the ſatire under the title of Jack Upland is alſo attributed to him upon very good authority; notwithſtanding which there want not many who, under colour of veneration for Chaucer's memory, are deſirous of imputing theſe pieces to others; and yet this would be of little uſe, for in many other works that are undoubtedly his we find ſentiments of the ſame nature. On the other hand the venerable John Fox thinks the labour of our Author in this reſpect worthy the higheſt commendation, and even attributes the preſervation of his Works to a particular providence. Let us hear him. "I

they were far enough from making a general impreſſion on the minds of people in London, where the meaner ſort of citizens were ſo warmly attached to the church, that upon the Duke of Lancaſter's attending Wickliffe when he was ſummoned before the Biſhop of London, and treating that prelate a little

" marvel to conſider this," ſays he, " how that the Biſhops " condemning and aboliſhing all manner of Engliſh books and " treatiſes which might bring the people to any light of know- " ledge, did yet authoriſe the Works of Chaucer to remain ſtill " and to be occupied, who no doubt ſaw in religion as much " almoſt as ever we do now, and uttereth in his Works no leſs, " and ſeemeth to be a right Wicklivian, or elſe there was ne- " ver any; and that all his Works almoſt, if they be thoroughly " adviſed, will teſtify, (albeit it be done in mirth and covertly) " and eſpecially the latter end of his third book of The Teſta- " ment of Love, for there purely he toucheth the higheſt mat- " ter, that is, the communion, wherein except a man be al- " together blind he may eſpy him at the full; although in the " ſame book (as in all other he uſeth to do) under ſhadows co- " vertly, as under a vizor, he ſuborneth truth in ſuch ſort as " both privily ſhe may profit the godly-minded, and yet not " be eſpied of the crafty adverſary; and therefore the Biſhops, " belike taking his words but for jeſts and toys, in condemn- " ing other books yet permitted his books to be read. So it " pleaſed God then to blind the eyes of them for the more " commodity of his people, to the intent that through the " reading of his Treatiſes ſome fruit might redound thereof to " his church, as no doubt it did to many. As alſo, I am partly " informed of certain which knew the parties, which to them " reported that by reading Chaucer's Works they were brought " to the true knowledge of religion: and not unlike to be true, " for to omit the other parts of his Volume, whereof ſome are " more fabulous than other, what tale can be more plainly told " than The Tale of the Ploughman?" &c.

roughly, they made a kind of inſurrection, and marching down into the Strand in a body entered into and rifled The Savoy, which was the Duke of Lancaſter's palace, built by himſelf, and at that time eſteemed one of the fineſt houſes in Europe, deſtroyed his goods, abuſed his ſervants, and turned his arms upſide down, as if he had been a traitor; but by the care of the King, and the interpoſition of ſome of the principal nobility, this quarrel was compromiſed, and the Duke and the citizens reconciled, at leaſt in appearance.

In the laſt year of King Edward the French having infringed the truce which that monarch had concluded with them, commiſſionaries were ſent over to expoſtulate that matter before the Pope's legates, and of theſe Chaucer was one. This negotiation of theirs was not very ſucceſsful, only it produced ſome mention of a marriage between Richard Prince of Wales and the Lady Mary, daughter to the French king, and thereby made way for a new treaty, in which Sir Guiſcard Dangle, Knight of the Garter, Sir Richard Sturrey, a great Wickliviſt, and in high favour with the King, together with Geoffrey Chaucer Eſq. were Commiſſioners; and this ſeems to have been the laſt publick employment that our Author bore, though from a gold chain about his neck, in that original picture of his ſtill remaining as is before-mentioned, it has been not without ſome ſhew of reaſon conjectured that he was honoured with ſome other dignity than from any

records we have been able to trace, for it can hardly be ſuppoſed that he wore this ornament on account of his office in the Cuſtoms.

June 21ſt 1377 the young Prince of Wales ſucceeded his grandfather by the title of Richard II. and his uncle the Duke of Lancaſter conſidering the incapacity of the King, who was then but eleven years of age, was intruſted with the chief ſhare of the adminiſtration, and therefore to ingratiate himſelf with the populace he reſolved to ſolemnize the new monarch's coronation with greater pomp and magnificence than had been ever ſeen in this kingdom, previous to which a court of claims was eſtabliſhed to ſettle the demands of thoſe who ſhould pretend to have a right to aſſiſt upon this occaſion, and among theſe we find Geoffrey Chaucer*.

* *And among theſe we find Geoffrey Chaucer.*] The claim made upon this occaſion was in right of his ward, who was poſſeſſed of the manor of Bilſington in Kent, which was held of the crown by the ſervice of preſenting to the King three maple cups on the day of his coronation. This manor had been purchaſed by Sir Edmond Staplegate, the father of Richard Fitz-Allen Earl of Arundel, whoſe family had been in long poſſeſſion of it; and it was ſet forth in Chaucer's petition that the manor was held by Grand Serjeantry, by the owner's diſcharging the office of Chief Butler at the King's coronation. But Richard Earl of Arundel controverted this claim, and by his petition and plea ſet forth, that the office of Chief Butler belonged to his family, and was never annexed to this manor, his anceſtors having enjoyed it both before they held that manor and ſince they parted with it, and therefore he demanded it as his proper right. The iſſue of this buſineſs was, that the Earl ſo far

It appears plainly that the Duke of Lancaſter, who was now in the zenith of power, let ſlip no opportunity of ſerving ſo firm a friend and ſo uſeful a dependent as our Author was, for in the very beginning of this reign it appears that by letters patents dated March 23d 1377 the King confirmed his grandfather's grant of twenty marks a-year; and by other letters patents dated the 18th of April following he likewiſe confirmed the other grant of a pitcher of wine daily; but whether Chaucer remained in his office of Comptroller of the Cuſtoms is not ſo clear, though the contrary ſeems to be moſt probable, for in a ſhort time after his affairs were in ſuch confuſion we find that, in the ſecond year of King Richard, he was obliged to have recourſe to the King's protection in order to ſcreen him from his creditors; but how he came to fall into theſe difficulties, and whether they were temporary only or of a long continuance, is a point that at this diſtance it is not poſſible to

carried his point before John Duke of Lancaſter, then acting as Lord High-Steward, as to be allowed to officiate for that time with a *ſalvo jure* that it ſhould not infringe the right of Edmond Staplegate, or any who ſhould pretend title for the future. This ward of our Author died about thirteen years after, but the manor continued in the family till the beginning of the reign of Henry VI. when it paſſed into that of the Cheyneys, who in the beginning of Queen Elizabeth's reign ſold it to Sir Francis Barham of London, and his grandſon Mr. Robert Barham was in poſſeſſion of it at the coronation of King Charles II. when Mr. Eraſmus Smith, on the behalf of the ſaid Mr. Barham, aſſiſted at the coronation, and preſented the three maple cups. This manor has ſince paſſed into other families.

ascertain; but from a comparison of circumstances it seems to be most likely that it was from some sudden accident he fell under this misfortune, and that he had recourse to the King's protection merely to gain time to settle his concerns. One may be the more confirmed in this by comparing his circumstances at this juncture with those of his family soon after. We have no direct historical lights indeed, but methinks though it be a new it is still a probable conjecture, that about this time he conveyed all his estates to his eldest son Thomas Chaucer; and the facts that seem to strengthen this conjecture shall be submitted to the reader's judgment at the bottom of the page *.

* *At the bottom of the page.*] All who have hitherto attempted to give any account of Chaucer's life have been very much at a loss about this circumstance of his having recourse to the King's protection, which shows that in the very beginning of this reign his affairs were in great disorder, and yet it is very plain that himself and his patron flourished in the full possession of power and plenty as long as King Edward III. lived. A certain writer hints that Chaucer exhausted his fortune in his foreign embassies; but a later writer observes, with greater probability, that he made his fortune by them; yet, as he very justly remarks, this by no means solves the doubt how he should come to be so very poor in so short a time, after his possessing so great wealth, for which amongst others we have his own authority. Now this riddle, I think, may be very probably explained thus. Our Author, Chaucer, about this time found out a very considerable match for his eldest son Thomas Chaucer, and this was Maud, the second daughter of Sir John Burgherhe, a man of very considerable rank, but by no means brother to Sir Bartholomew Burgherhe Knight of the Garter, and of Dr. Henry Burgherhe Bishop of Lincoln, Chancellor and Treasurer of England, as a

In the fourth year of King Richard the IId's reign he procured a confirmation of the grants that had been formerly made to himſelf and to Philippa his wife, which is a proof that he had a great perſonal intereſt in this court, ſince at the time of his obtaining this grant the power and influence of the Duke of Lan-

certain writer very confidently aſſerts, but rather, if I gueſs right, the nephew of thoſe great men, and the ſon of Sir John Burgherſhe, who was truly their brother; and this I am led to believe, becauſe it appears upon record that the cuſtody of this John Burgherſhe, the father of Maud, was granted in his nonage to the daughter of Sir Bartholomew Burgherſhe beforementioned. A great fortune ſhe was without doubt, but not the only daughter or ſole heireſs of her family, as has been repreſented, or at leaſt not ſo at the time ſhe married Thomas Chaucer, though ſhe might be and indeed was ſo afterwards. Neither are we to believe what we are told of her being a ward to the crown, for her father was then living, and lived many years after, that is, to the 19th of Richard II. when he left behind him two daughters, Margaret the eldeſt, firſt married to Sir John Grenville Knight, and then to John Arundel Eſq. and this Maud. Now my ſuppoſition is that Geoffrey Chaucer, for obtaining this great match, ſettled all his land eſtate upon his ſon, and that his doing this might bring upon him thoſe demands which put him under the neceſſity of obtaining the King's protection. As to the ſeveral facts upon which this conjecture is built, I think they are ſupported by as good authorities as can be deſired; nor can any great difficulty ariſe from the age of this young gentleman, as may appear thus: Chaucer married his wife Philippa Rouet about the year 1360, and if he had this ſon the next year he might be of full age in the latter end of the fourth year of Richard II. when this marriage took place, and before which in all probability the father might make this ſettlement. We ſhall have occaſion hereafter to ſay more of this gentleman, who became a much greater man than his father, to whom he was a ſupport in his declining years.

caster was very much sunk, as from a train of sinister accidents waiting upon his conduct he was become equally suspected by the King and disliked by the people. The great encouragement and support he had afforded to Mr. Wickliffe was attended with consequences that he did not in the least expect, and yet found it not in his power to hinder; for without doubt the Duke's great view in supporting this party was to weaken the power of the clergy, and to hinder them from taking so large a share as they did in the management of all temporal affairs; but some great men of his party, mistaking his view, pushed things to extremities, and by countenancing itinerant preachers without either learning or sound principles, made way for a sudden turn, which had very near subverted the constitution and thrown all things into confusion; for the common people, thus encouraged to shake off the yoke of the clergy, began to think that of the government also too heavy, and, taking occasion from some taxes lately imposed, rose up in arms under the conduct of Wat Tyler, Jack Straw, and such kind of leaders, with a wild intention of freeing themselves from whatever these wise leaders taught them to look upon as oppressions. Their resentment was chiefly directed against the clergy, as appears by their beheading the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Prior of St. John's by Smithfield, who was Lord Treasurer, and by their

burning that ſtately priory, and plundering the abbies of St. Alban's, Bury, and ſeveral others.

As ſoon as this rebellion was ſomewhat abated the parliament began to inquire into the cauſe of it; nor were there wanting enemies of Wickliffe who charged him and his followers with being the encouragers of it: but that is unlikely to be true; for had the rebels been Wickliffe's friends they would never have burnt The Savoy, the palace of his patron the Duke of Lancaſter. However, ſome of his followers gave too much cauſe for ſuch a ſurmiſe, as Dr. Hereford, who aſſerted that Archbiſhop Sudbury deſerved that death he found; and the King the year following empowered the Biſhops to arreſt Wickliffe, and forbad his ſubjects to encourage any of that perſuaſion; yet Wickliffe appeared, and ſeemed partly to ſatisfy the Biſhops with his opinion.

It is commonly ſaid by moſt of our hiſtorians that from this time forward the Duke of Lancaſter diſowned the Wicklivites, and charging the late diſturbances upon them ſtyled their opinions the doctrine of devils. The writers alſo of our Author's life give into this opinion, and ſeem to think that he likewiſe began to temporize, and did not ſpeak his ſentiments ſo freely as formerly; but the truth is otherwiſe, for the Duke of Lancaſter did not condemn Wickliffe's doctrine, but the doctrines of Dr. Hereford and other followers of Wickliffe, who had now deſerted him,

and propagated many dangerous tenets which he diſclaimed. As for Chaucer, he was ſo far from abandoning his former notions that he exerted himſelf to the utmoſt in 1382 in the ſupport of John Comberton, generally ſtyled John of Northampton, Mayor of London, in his endeavours to reform the city, according to the advice given by Wickliffe, which was ſo much reſented by the clergy, that rather than they would let this reformation proceed they had recourſe to the moſt violent methods, and in order to prevent Comberton's being rechoſen Mayor of London excited ſuch diſturbances as bordered upon a rebellion. The King making uſe of force upon this occaſion, ſent Sir Robert Knolles to London, who committed great ſeverities, put ſome to death, made the late Mayor Comberton priſoner, and uſed his utmoſt endeavours to apprehend Chaucer †; but our Author,

† *His utmoſt endeavours to apprehend Chaucer.*] It is very certain that in this whole matter our Author ſuffered for his attachment to his party, but this is ſo darkly repreſented by ſuch as have written his life that it is a very difficult thing to diſcover their meaning, and yet after all the fact is no more than this: there were at that time two powerful factions in the City, and as very ſeldom any thing of this kind happens but religion is drawn into the quarrel, ſo the one was ſuppoſed to be wellaffected to the church, and the other inclined to a reformation. Dr. Courtney, formerly Biſhop of London, and now Archbiſhop of Canterbury, was protector of the one, and John Duke of Lancaſter was eſteemed to be the head of the other, and the leading man in his intereſt was this John Comberton, or John of Northampton, citizen and draper, on whoſe account

having an early foresight of his danger, made his escape into Hainault, and from thence went to France, where finding himself not so safe as he expected he withdrew

all this disturbance happened for which some lives were lost; and this unfortunate person being carried to Reading, was there tried and convicted, and had judgment given against him to be imprisoned for life, and to have his goods seized, which we find was accordingly done: and so strong the current ran at that time that he with some other citizens of his party were excepted out of a pardon which the King granted; and all this was then understood to be done in spite and contempt of the Duke of Lancaster, to whom Comberton steadily adhered, and called him *his Lord* at his trial. But for all this things came about again not long after, and Mr. Comberton had the honour to have his sentence reversed at the prayer of the Commons of England in parliament assembled. We may from all this infer, that how warm and indiscreet soever our Author, Chaucer, might be in supporting that party to which he had attached himself, yet beyond all question there was nothing of disloyalty in this, but quite the contrary; for those who had then the management of the King's affairs, and run him into all these warm and violent measures, were the very same persons who by their evil counsels brought him at last into that distressed condition which cost him first his crown and then his life. It is therefore no discredit to Chaucer that he was a friend to Wickliffe, or that he espoused this party in the City, however some of our historians may have represented or rather misrepresented it; for it is a thing well enough known to all who are conversant in the English history, that many base and black calumnies are thrown upon the Duke of Lancaster and his party, merely on account of their opposing the pride and power of the prelates of those times, who under colour of maintaining the King's prerogative really sacrificed him to their own interests, which at the same time also they very ill understood, since a reasonable compliance had both saved him and done themselves much more good.

into Zealand, and there concealed himſelf for ſome time, with ſeveral other Londoners, who had fled upon the ſame account, and whom he generouſly ſubſiſted out of his own private fortune. But while he was in this diſtreſs moſt of thoſe with whom he had been engaged at home had found ways and means to make their peace, and far from conſidering the calamities to which Chaucer had expoſed himſelf for their ſakes took no care to ſupply him, and, which was much worſe, endeavoured to hinder the remittances that might have been made him out of his own fortune, and this in hopes that he might periſh in his baniſhment, and by his death put them out of all fear. Such baſe and barbarous ingratitude though it extremely afflicted him, yet it did not put our Author upon taking any meaſures to be revenged; on the contrary, he came over privately into England to avoid ſtarving in a ſtrange country, but had not been long here before, either through the vigilance of the government's inquiries or the treachery of ſome whom he truſted, he was diſcovered, ſeized, and ſent to priſon, where he was treated at firſt with great rigour and ſeverity, but in the end promiſed the King's pardon and his liberty if he would diſcloſe all he knew, and put it in the power of the government to reſtore the peace of the City, which at length he did. It does not appear what the conſequences were of his confeſſion with reſpect to others, but with regard to himſelf

they brought upon him an inexpreſſible load of calumnies and ſlanders. All theſe circumſtances we learn from himſelf in that moſt excellent treatiſe of his entitled The Teſtament of Love, which he wrote on purpoſe to vent his ſorrow and to conſole himſelf under the heavy burden of his afflictions. This load, which was already almoſt too heavy for him, received however ſome very conſiderable additions from the concurrence of other untoward accidents, ſuch as the Duke of Lancaſter's loſing much of his credit at court, and Chaucer not a little of his intereſt with the Duke, who finding his reputation very much injured by the liberties taken with his character on account of his amours with the Lady Swynford, he came, though very unwillingly, to a full reſolution of parting with her, which he accordingly did; and this for a time affected the concerns of our Author extremely, who finding himſelf ſtrongly puſhed on one ſide by ſuch as meant him ill, and little if at all ſupported on the other by ſuch as had been formerly his friends, was ſo much depreſſed thereby in his mind and diſtreſſed in his fortune, as to reſolve upon diſpoſing of his penſions before-mentioned, which he had obtained in the former and had been confirmed to him in the preſent reign; and this he actually did to one John Scalby, as appears by a licenſe obtained for this purpoſe on record. In this unexpected and terrible reverſe of fortune he very wiſely reſolved to quit that buſy ſcene

of life in which he had met with fo many troubles, and to feek in retirement that happinefs which from experience he knew was not to be met with in courts. The place he chofe for his retreat was Woodftock, which had been the fweet fcene of fo much fatisfaction to him in the days of his profperity, and there he employed part of his time in revifing and correcting his writings, totally fecluded from the world, and tafting only thofe calm and folid pleafures which are the refult of a wife man's reflections on the viciffitudes of human life. By this means he became well prepared for a new alteration in his condition, and as unexpected a change in his affairs as he had hitherto met with; for the abfence of the great Duke of Lancafter which had coft him fo dear, gave him the better title to hope his favour and his protection upon his return, which happened towards the end of the year 1389. He had made an expedition into Spain in order to recover the kingdoms of Caftile and Leon, of which in right of his wife he had affumed the title; and though his fuccefs in war was at firft various, and at laft difaftrous, yet fo wife and prudent a prince he was, that after difmiffing his army and feeming to relinquifh that great defign, for the accomplifhment of which he had fpent fo much, he had notwithftanding fo great addrefs as to be able to extract even from his difappointment almoft as much as he could have expected from victory; for though he could not make

himſelf a king, yet he made two of his daughters queens, one of Caſtile, and the other of Portugal, bringing home with him alſo a vaſt treaſure in ready money, having at the time he landed in England, as one of our hiſtorians tells us, as many cheſts of gold as loaded forty-ſeven mules. Upon his return, in ſo good circumſtances, his party began to revive, and the Duke recovered his credit at court, inſomuch that the King in full parliament created him Duke of Aquitaine, and ſent him over to take poſſeſſion of that noble principality. His old affection for the Lady Catharine Swynford, ſiſter to Chaucer's wife, revived with his fortune, and under colour of rewarding the care ſhe had taken in the education of his daughters he made her very large grants in the nature of penſions*. We have no

* *He made her very large grants in the nature of penſions.*] The colour given by the Duke of Lancaſter to theſe grants made in favour of the Lady Swynford was the care ſhe had taken of his two daughters Philippa and Elizabeth, as appears by the words of the grant of the wardſhip of Bertram de Sanbys's heir and of an annuity of two hundred marks *per annum* payable out of his honour of Tickhill, which words are theſe; "For the good "and agreeable ſervice which our thrice dear and moſt beloved "Lady Catharine Swynford, the miſtreſs of our moſt beloved "daughters, hath rendered to our ſaid children, we have gi- "ven and granted, &c." But no doubt the true reaſon was for his ſpecial affection towards her on account of the children he had had by her, to whom he gave the name of Beaufort, in Latin *de bello forte*, from a caſtle ſo called in Anjou, which came into his family by the Lady Blanch of Artois Queen of Navarre. Theſe children were four, *viz.* John Beaufort, afterwards Earl of Somerſet, Henry Beaufort, afterwards Cardinal Biſhop of Wincheſter and Chancellor of England, Thomas Beaufort, Earl

particular account of the benefits that accrued to Chaucer from this turn in the Duke's affairs, but notwithstanding this we have no reason to doubt that he felt the effects of his patron's prosperity, who had suffered so deeply by the declension of his influence. But it seems his distaste to courts was grown so strong that nothing could tempt him to quit his rural retirement, or to lanch again into that sea of business where he had been so lately shipwrecked. His mind however being more at rest he undertook and finished a new work, which has established his reputation with respect to learning upon as firm a basis as his former labours had fixed his fame for wit and genius. This new work plainly appears to be wrote in the year 1391, and was intended for the use of his younger son Lewis, then no more than ten years of age, and yet so forward in his learning as to be desirous of having his father's instructions in acquiring the principles of astronomy. This gave birth to his Treatise on the Astrolabe, which not only

of Dorset, afterwards Duke of Exeter, and Joan, first married to Sir Robert Ferrers of Oversly, and afterwards to Ralph Ear of Westmoreland. We have mentioned this more particularly, because of the near relation between the descendants of our Author and those of this lady by the Duke of Lancaster, of which we find it remembered by a very curious and circumspect writer in the time of King Charles I. that there had been eight kings, four queens, and five princes, of England; six kings and three queens of Scotland; two cardinals, upwards of twenty dukes, almost as many duchesses of England, severa dukes of Scotland, besides many potent princes and eminent nobility in foreign parts.

ſhows the ſkill of its author, but likewiſe inconteſtably proves uſeful ſcience was not at near ſo low an ebb in thoſe times as it is generally repreſented. Neither will the caſe be at all altered if what ſome writers have ſuggeſted ſhould really prove true, and this Diſcourſe of Chaucer's appear to be no more than a tranſlation, or, which ſeems to be ſtill a more probable opinion, a collection from other authors who had written before him upon the ſame ſubject.

About four years after this, while her huſband was in France, Conſtance Ducheſs of Lancaſter died, and was buried with great ſolemnity at Leiceſter, and the Duke coming over into England at the cloſe of the year, and not meeting with quite ſo kind a reception at court as he expected, went ſuddenly to Lincoln, where his old miſtreſs Lady Catharine Swynford reſided, and to the great ſurpriſe of the world, now when ſhe had not either youth or beauty to recommend her, married her. This gave great diſcontent to the Ducheſs of Glouceſter, the Counteſs of Derby, the Counteſs of Arundel, and other ladies deſcended of the royal family, becauſe ſhe became by this marriage the ſecond perſon in the realm, and from being no fit companion for any, was now ſuddenly to take place of them all; but ſhe behaved with ſo much diſcretion and humility that theſe diſputes were quickly compoſed, and in a ſhort time ſhe gained ſuch an aſcendency over the King that he carried her, as well as the Duke her

husband, with him the year after their marriage into France, at which time he espoused Isabel the French king's daughter, then very young, and who was put under the care of the Duchess of Lancaster.

After the ceremony of this marriage, and the return of the royal family to England, we find a very singular instance of the advantage that Chaucer received from this alliance, for now by letters patents the King granted him an annuity of twenty marks *per annum*, in lieu of that given him by his grandfather, and which in the time of his distress he had been compelled to dispose of for his subsistence. Soon after this he granted him his protection by other letters patents dated the 4th of May in the 21st year of his reign for two years, signifying that for that space he had occasion to employ him in his service. Neither was this the last or greatest instance afforded him of royal favour, since we find that by letters patents dated the 13th of October in the following year he had a pipe of wine annually granted out of the Customs of the port of London, which was to be delivered him by the Chief Butler, and to this office his son Thomas Chaucer was now raised.

But if these benefits cheered and comforted his decayed spirits in the decline of life, he had however the mortification to lose about the same time his noble patron, his constant friend, and kind brother, the Duke of Lancaster, by whom he was first brought to court,

and through whose favour he never wanted either countenance or support when it was in his power to bestow. This loss very probably afflicted him deeply, as we may gather from his retiring about this time to Dunnington-Castle, where he spent most of his days during the last two years of his life, indulging his grave thoughts in the solitude of that sweet retreat *.

* *Of that sweet retreat.*] It is not very clear at what time our Author quitted his beloved house at Woodstock in order to go to Dunnington-Castle, where he spent the last two years of his life, but as this was his final retreat, and became very remarkable for being so, an account of it cannot be unacceptable to the reader. It was in Mr. Camden's time (when in its glory) "a small but neat castle, situate upon the brow of a rising hill, "having an agreeable prospect, very light, with windows on "all sides, said to be built by Sir Richard Adderbury Knt. who "likewise founded an hospital beneath it called God's House; "it was afterwards the seat of Chaucer, then of the De la Poles, "and in our fathers' memory the dwelling of Charles Brandon "Duke of Suffolk." At the beginning of the rebellion in the reign of King Charles I. it was a garrison for the King under the valiant Sir John Boys, which commanded the western road and town of Newbury, and was therefore of great advantage to the royal party as a safe retreat, and the cannon playing from it much annoyed the parliament forces. This place his Majesty honoured by lying one night in it, but after a rough assault and as bold a resistance, during which several of the towers were battered down, it was surrendered upon honourable conditions. This was the ancient state and the occasion of the late ruin of that pleasant structure. At present there is nothing to be seen of it but what raises horrour and concern, a battered gateway with two towers, and some small part of the shattered walls, being all that remains thereof. The ground about it and the ruins of it are choked with brambles and overrun with ivy; but lest the place of its situation should in a

In this ſituation he was when that great revolution happened which placed Henry of Lancaſter, the ſon of his brother-in-law, upon the throne, in which as Chaucer had no hand, (though certainly it could not diſpleaſe him) ſo we do not find that he was at all eager in paying his compliments to the new King, much leſs that he triumphed in the misfortunes of his late kind maſter and gracious benefactor, as others, and particularly Gower, who had been more obliged to that unfortunate prince, and who at that time was both old and blind, moſt ſhamefully did. He did not however ſlight the advantages offered him by this revolution, but having accidentally loſt the two laſt grants of an annuity, and of the pipe of wine by King Richard, he obtained a confirmation of them in the 1ſt

few years more be forgot I ſhall as plainly as I can deſcribe it. It lies half a mile to the right of Spinhamland, (the ancient Spina of Antonius) a mile beyond Newbury, on the ſame ſide. As you go from London you paſs over the river Kennet to the village of Dunnington, from which there is a pretty ſteep but pleaſant aſcent through a lane to a hill under the Caſtle, where ſtands a ſeat formerly belonging to the Counteſs of Sandwich: from hence ariſes the Caſtlehill very ſteep, and not unlike that whereon the Obſervatory ſtands at Greenwich, and from this hill there is a very fine proſpect of ſeveral counties. On the back of the Caſtle are level grounds, woodlands, and encloſures. The Caſtle itſelf ſtands in a pleaſant park, in which there was a famous oak called Chaucer's Oak, under which, as tradition taught, he wrote ſeveral poems. Mr. Evelyn gives a particular account of this tree, and ſays there were three of them planted by Chaucer, the King's oak, the Queen's oak, and Chaucer's oak.

year of Henry IV. by an exemplification of his former letters patents. Neither was this the only favour he received from the new king, who out of regard to the ancient friendship and near alliance between the prince his father and our Author granted him, during the 1ſt year of his reign, an annuity of forty marks *per annum* for the term of his life. It is true indeed that a very great writer, a ſincere admirer of our Author, and moſt deſervedly a poet-laureate himſelf, informs us that Ch. enjoyed this honour under three kings, Edward III. Richard II. and Henry IV.; but this is a miſtake, for in truth there was no ſuch office in thoſe days, or, if we may truſt to the authority of the learned Selden, before the reign of Edward IV. If we take this in a more extenſive ſenſe, for an eminent poet who celebrated theſe princes, it may be juſtly applied to Chaucer in regard to the two firſt, but we find nothing in his Works relating to the laſt, nor indeed is his name ſo much as mentioned in any of our Author's writings.

The ſmall time he lived after the acceſſion of this king was chiefly employed in regulating his private affairs, which had ſuffered by the publick diſorders, for all the publick acts of the depoſed King Richard in the 21ſt year of his reign being declared void, Chaucer was forced to quit his retirement to come up to Town to ſolicit his cauſes, and beginning now to bend under the weight of years, this unlucky acceſſion

of businefs, which obliged him to alter his ufual way of living, might very poffibly haften his end, the near approach of which he bore with Roman conftancy, or rather with Chriftian patience; for there is ftill extant a kind of ode that he is faid to have compofed in his laft agonies, which very plainly proves that his fenfes were perfectly found, and the faculties of his mind not in the leaft impaired *. He died October 25th 1400, in the full poffeffion of that high reputation which his writings had defervedly acquired, and was buried in Weftminfter Abbey, in the great fouth-crofs ifle. Some writers have affirmed that he was firft buried in the cloifter, and lay there till fome years after; but this is a miftake, for Caxton in his edition of Chaucer, (which was long before the time of his removal as they place it) fays that he was buried in the Abbey-church of Weftminfter before the chapel of St. Bennet. And it is very probable he lay beneath a large ftone of grey marble in the pavement, where the monument of Mr. Dryden now ftands, which is in the front of that chapel, upon the erecting of which this ftone was taken up and fawed in pieces to make good the pavement; at leaft this feems beft to anfwer the defcription of the place given by Caxton. As to the alterations that have happened fince, and the in-

* *And the faculties of his mind not in the leaft impaired.*] This fonnet or ode confifts of no more than three ftanzas: it is that entitled *Gode Counfaile of Chaucer.*

ſcriptions now viſible on his tomb, an account will be given in the notes*.

* *In the notes.*] We are told by Speght and other authors that the following lines ſtood anciently upon Chaucer's tomb-ſtone.

Galfridus Chaucer, vates et fama poeſis
Maternæ hac ſacra ſum tumulatis humo.

This anciently muſt refer only to the time of Caxton, who procured a long epitaph to be written in honour of our Author by Stephanus Surigonius, Poet-Laureate of Milan, which was hung upon a pillar over-againſt Chaucer's graveſtone, towards the end of which epitaph theſe two lines occur. But about the year 1555, as a very exact author reports, or in 1556, as Wood will have it, Mr. Nicholas Brigham, a gentleman of Oxford who exerciſed his Muſe much in poetry, and took great delight in Chaucer's Works, and honoured his memory, at his own charge erected a handſome monument for him not far from the ſaid chapel, for in the ſame place he could not then conveniently erect it, by reaſon of the cancelli which the late Duke of Buckingham obtained leave to remove to make rōom for Mr. Dryden's tomb. Upon that monument Mr. Brigham cauſed Chaucer's picture to be painted from that which was in Occleve's book, together with the following inſcription, which ſtill remains;

M. S.

Qui fuit Anglorum vates ter maximus olim,
Galfridus Chaucer conditur hoc tumulo:
Annum ſi quæras Domini, ſi tempora vitæ,
Ecce notæ ſubſunt quæ tibi cuncta notunt.
25 Octobris 1400.
Ærumnarum requies mors.
N. Brigham hos fecit Muſarum nomine ſumptus.
1556.

In Engliſh thus.

Of Engliſh bards who ſang the ſweeteſt ſtrains
Old Geoffrey Chaucer now this tomb contains:

We may justly affirm of this great man, that in whatever light he is considered he seems always to merit our esteem as well as to claim our admiration. In his publick character, if we consider the time in which he lived, we must acknowledge that he shewed as great steadiness, and adhered as firmly to his

For his death's date if reader thou should'st call,
Look but beneath and it will tell thee all.
25th October 1400.

Of cruel cares the certain cure is death.

N. Brigham placed these, in the name of the Muses, at his own expense, 1556.

About the ledge of the tomb we are told the following verses were written that are now worn out; but it is more probable that they were inscribed upon a ledge of brass that is taken away, for there is not the least sign of any letters upon the stone itself;

Si rogites quis eram, forsan te fama docebit;
Quod si fama negat, mundi quia gloria transit,
Hac monumenta lege.

If who I was you ask Fame shall declare;
If Fame denies, since frail all glories are,
These stones shall speak, inscrib'd with pious care.

It may not be amiss to observe, that this date of his death is preserved by several writers, who also inform us that he was then seventy-two. Some indeed have questioned it, because of a piece entitled Cupid's Letter, printed with Chaucer's Works, and dated in 1402; but that was written by Thomas Occleve his scholar, and was intended to do honour to his Works and memory. The Rev. Mr. Collier fixes his death in 1440, which was the 19 of Henry VI. and if so Chaucer was but ten years old at the death of King Edward III. which contradicts all the records, and is in every respect a most glaring absurdity, whereas the other date agrees with them exactly, and therefore there can be no doubt of its truth.

principles, as could be expected; and as to his gratitude towards and affection for his patron the great Duke of Lancaster, it stands in no need of apology. His conduct in the last part of his life was full of prudence and that calm contempt for an ungrateful world which though it is easy for a man of parts to conceive, yet to persist in it is a very difficult task. In private life he was a fine gentleman, a learned writer, and an agreeable companion. In his youth he was gay, and loved pleasure, for which he might not only plead the usual excuses of his age and constitution, but the custom also of the times, since he lived in the most gallant reign from the Conquest. But in his maturer state of life his manners altered, and his behaviour was modest and grave to a degree of excess, for which he was rallied by his patroness the Countess of Pembroke, who told him his absence created more mirth than his conversation, for he was very bashful and reserved in company, notwithstanding that life and spirit which appears in his writings. If we look upon him as an author, he may be truly styled the Father of English Poetry, and perhaps the Prince of it, for except the unavoidable defects of language his Works have still all the beauties that can be wished for or expected in every kind of composition. He was not unacquainted with the ancient rules of poetry, nor was he incapable of writing up to them, as very clearly appears by The Knight's Tale, which, as Mr. Dryden very justly says, is a fi-

nifhed epick poem; but he did not always judge this exactnefs neceffary, and perhaps he thought his genius fet him above thofe reftraints that ought to limit, becaufe they improve, the works of meaner poets. He was deeply verfed in moral and in natural philofophy, and as perhaps no man underftood human nature better, fo it may be truly faid that no writer in any language has either painted it with greater force, exactnefs, or judgment. His reading was deep and extenfive, and his learning both fpecious and folid; for he knew how to expofe thofe parts of it to view that are moft apt to attract publick applaufe, and yet leave a fenfe concealed that might at once employ and fatisfy the moft inquifitive underftandings. It would draw this article into too great a length fhould we perfift in exhibiting every part of his accomplifhed character, and therefore we will in the notes give the beft account we may of his merit in general as a poet in all the different kinds of writing by which he diftinguifhed himfelf in that capacity †; and next we will give the reader the cleareft

† *By which he diftinguifhed himfelf in that capacity.*] We may fafely affirm that of Chaucer which can be hardly faid of any other general poet ancient or modern, that he excelled in all the different kinds of verfe in which he wrote. In his fonnets or love-fongs, when he was but a very boy, there is not only fire and judgment, but great elegance of thought and neatnefs of compofure. It is very true that he did not always ftand upon his own ground, but chofe rather to tranflate from the Italian or French; yet he chofe his authors judicioufly and ufed them freely; fo that this, inftead of finking, ferves really

account we may of his largeſt work, peculiar in its kind, and as it was almoſt without example, ſo hi-

to heighten his character. That in the elegiack poetry he was a complete maſter appears plainly by his Complaint of the Black Knight, the poem called La belle Dame ſans Mercy, and ſeveral of his ſongs. He was an excellent maſter of love poetry, having ſtudied that paſſion in all its turns and appearances; and Mr. Dryden prefers him upon that account to Ovid. His Troilus and Creſeide is one of the moſt beautiful poems of that kind, in which love is curiouſly and naturally deſcribed in its early appearance, its hopes and fears, its application, fruition, and deſpair in diſappointment. How great a maſter he was in ſatire we ſhall have occaſion to ſhow in the next note; but his great proficiency in this did not at all hinder his diſcharging himſelf moſt happily in a far more difficult way of writing, that of panegyrick. The praiſes of Chaucer are eaſy, natural, and delicate, ſuch as muſt give equal pleaſure to the perſon commended and to the peruſer, and have always the true air of a courtier without the meanneſs of a flatterer. His moral poems are grave and weighty, full of good ſenſe and of fine ſentiments. In a word, he deſerves all that is ſaid of him by Mr. Dryden, who was ſcarce a better poet than a critick; let us hear him then a little upon this ſubject. "As he is the "father of Engliſh poetry, ſo I hold him in the ſame degree of "veneration as the Grecians held Homer or the Romans Vir-"gil; he is a perpetual fountain of good ſenſe, learned in all "ſciences, and therefore ſpeaks properly on all ſubjects: as he "knew what to ſay, ſo he knows alſo when to leave off, a con-"tinence which is practiſed by few writers, and ſcarcely by "any of the Ancients excepting Virgil and Horace—Chaucer "followed Nature every where, but was never ſo bold to go "beyond her: and there is as great difference of being *poë-"ta et nimis poëta*, if we may believe Catullus, as much as be-"twixt a modeſt behaviour and affectation. The verſe of Ch. "I confeſs is not harmonious to us, but it is like the eloquence "of one whom Tacitus commends, it was *auribus iſtius tempo-"ris accommodata.* They who lived with him, and ſome time

therto above the reach of imitation, I mean his Canterbury Tales*.

" after him, thought it mufical, and it continues fo even in our
" judgment if compared with the numbers of Lydgate and
" Gower his contemporaries. There is the rude fweetnefs of a
" Scotch tune in it, which is natural and pleafing though not
" perfect. It is true I cannot go fo far as he who publifhed
" the laft edition of him, for he would make us believe the
" fault is in our ears, and that there are really ten fyllables in a
" verfe where we find but nine; but this opinion is not worth
" confuting; it is fo grofs and obvious an errour that common
" fenfe (which is a rule in every thing but matters of faith and
" revelation) muft convince the reader that equality of num-
" bers in every verfe which we call heroick was either not
" known or not always practifed in Chaucer's age: it were an
" eafy matter to produce fome thoufands of his verfes which
" are lame for want of half a foot, and fometimes a whole one,
" and which no pronunciation can make otherwife. We can
" only fay that he lived in the infancy of our poetry, and that
" nothing is brought to perfection at the firft. We muft be
" children before we grow men. There was an Ennius, and in
" procefs of time a Lucilius and a Lucretius, before Virgil and
" Horace; even after Chaucer there was a Spenfer, a Harring-
" ton, a Fairfax, before Waller and Denham were in being; and
" our numbers were in their nonage till thefe laft appeared."

* *I mean his Canterbury Tales.*] The fcheme of this work is in every refpect very extraordinary, and of fo vaft an extent that at firft fight one would be apt to pronounce it abfolutely impracticable, from a perfuafion that it muft furpafs the powers of any fingle mind to paint the different lineaments, and call out to view the various faculties, of every mind. The truth as well as the meaning of this fentiment will beft appear from a fhort reprefentation of the Author's defign, which is this: Chaucer pretends, that intending to pay his devotions to the fhrine of Thomas à Becket, he fet up his horfe at the Tabard-inn in Southwark, that he found in the inn a number of pilgrims who feverally propofed the fame journey, and that they

We have already, in the courſe of his memoirs, ſpoken of moſt of his patrons, who were the greateſt

all agreed to ſup together, and to ſet out the next morning on the ſame party. The ſupper being finiſhed the landlord, a fellow of ſenſe and drollery, conformable to his character and calling, makes them no diſagreeable propoſal, that to divert them on their journey each of them ſhould be obliged to tell two ſtories, one going, the other coming back, and that whoever in the judgment of the company ſhould ſucceed beſt in this art of tale-telling, by way of recompenſe, at their return to his inn, ſhould be entitled to a good ſupper at the common coſt; which propoſal aſſented to he promiſes to be their governor and guide. At the entrance of the poem the characters of all the pilgrims are diſtinctly drawn, and a plan of the comedy, in which they ſtand for the *Dramatis Perſonæ*. Beſides this every Tale has its Prologue, and a kind of Epilogue too, which ſerves by way of tranſition to the next; and to the honour of our Author be it ſpoken, ſo far as his plan is executed every part of it is performed with equal juſtice and ſpirit, and above all the character of the Hoſt, who acts as a kind of Chorus in the ancient drama, is moſt admirably kept up, and the ſame wit, ſpirit, and humour, is preſerved through the whole journey that ſtrikes and aſtoniſhes the reader ſo much at the very beginning, where the original character of this incomparable perſon is drawn at full length. A ſtronger argument in ſupport of this character of The Canterbury Tales cannot well be brought than ariſes from the authority of three great poets who have judged them worthy of imitation and revival, I mean Spenſer, Dryden, and Pope, to whom we may add Mr. Betterton, who tranſlated many of the characters of Chaucer, and muſt have been allowed to have been as fit a judge of them as any of the foregoing. But the reader will receive the fulleſt ſatisfaction on this head from the critical remarks of Mr. Dryden, who as he perfectly underſtood ſo he has very freely given us his ſentiments on this maſterpiece of our Author's. "He muſt," ſays he, "have been a man of a "moſt wonderful comprehenſive nature, becauſe, as it has been "truly obſerved of him, he has taken into the compaſs of his

as well as ableſt men of thoſe times. The circle of his friends was alſo very large, and his communicative

" Canterbury Tales the various manners and humours, as we " now call them, of the whole Engliſh nation in his age: not a " ſingle character has eſcaped him. All his pilgrims are ſeverally " diſtinguiſhed from each other, and not only in their inclina- " tions but in their very phyſiognomies and perſons. Baptiſta " Porta could not have deſcribed their natures better than by " the marks which the poet gives them. The matter and man- " ner of their Tales, and of their telling, are ſo ſuited to their " different educations, humours, and callings, that each of them " would be improper in any other mouth. Even the grave and " ſerious characters are diſtinguiſhed by their ſeveral ſorts of " gravity; their diſcourſes are ſuch as belong to their age, their " calling, and their breeding; ſuch as are becoming of them, " and of them only. Some of his perſons are vicious, and ſome " virtuous; ſome are unlearned, (or, as Ch. calls them) lewd, " and ſome are learned. Even the ribaldry of the low charac- " ters is different; the Reeve, the Miller, and the Cook, are ſe- " veral men, and diſtinguiſhed from each other as much as the " mincing Lady Prioreſs and the broad-ſpeaking gap-toothed " Wife of Bath. But enough of this; there is ſuch a variety of " game ſpringing up before me that I am diſtracted in my " choice, and know not which to follow. It is ſufficient to ſay, " according to the proverb, that here is God's plenty. We " have our foreſathers and great-grandams all before us as " they were in Chaucer's days; their general characters are " ſtill remaining in mankind, and even in England, tho' they " are called by other names than thoſe of Monks and Friars, of " Chanons, and Lady-Abbeſſes, and Nuns; for mankind is ever " the ſame, and nothing loſt out of nature, though every thing " is altered.—Boccace lived in the ſame age with Chaucer, " had the ſame genius, and followed the ſame ſtudies; both " writ novels, and each of them cultivated his mother tongue. " —In the ſerious part of poetry the advantage is wholly on " Chaucer's ſide, for tho' the Engliſhman has borrowed many " tales from the Italian, yet it appears that thoſe of Boccace

diſpoſition made him as much beloved by his contemporaries as he was admired both by them and by poſterity. He appears to have been uſeful to them in every manner that was in his power, and it was this diſpoſition, in all probability, that kept them ſo firm to his intereſt while he was living, and taught them to have ſo high a reſpect for his memory after his deceaſe. It is no difficult thing to compile a liſt of them from his writings, in which he has mentioned them with all the marks of kindneſs and eſteem poſſible, a circumſtance favourable to himſelf and to them, for in this poets have the advantage even of princes; the latter, how great ſoever, can confer only temporary benefits, but the former can beſtow immortality; and therefore princes themſelves have courted, not perhaps without political reaſons, the goodwill of theſe favourites of the Muſes; but we are apt to ſuſpect their praiſes when applied to their patrons of high rank more than their commendations of private friends; the former is commonly dictated by the head, whereas the latter flows from the heart, and this conſidera-

"were not generally of his own making, but taken from authors of former ages, and by him only modelled, ſo that what was of invention in either of them may be judged equal. But Chaucer has refined on Boccace, and has mended the ſtories which he has borrowed in his way of telling, though proſe allows more liberty of thought, and the expreſſion is more eaſy when unconfined by numbers. Our countryman carries weight, and yet wins the race at diſadvantage."

tion alone makes it reafonable that we fhould infift more particularly on thofe whom our Author has thus configned to fame: but in order to fpare the reader's time we fhall mention only a very few of Chaucer's intimate friends and contemporaries at the bottom of the page *.

* *At the bottom of the page.*] Amongft the earlieft of Chaucer's friends, and alfo directors of his ftudies, were Nicholas of Lynne and John Some, both Carmelite monks, and extremely well verfed in mathematical fciences, the former more efpecially, who left behind him feveral learned books, and is commended by Leland as having excelled in aftronomy all that went before him. We have before mentioned Ralph Strode, who was both a celebrated poet and philofopher of Merton-college in Oxford, where it feems our Author was intimately acquainted with him, and had a great veneration for his abilities. It is a ftrange errour which the author of the life of Chaucer prefixed to Mr. Urry's edition has fallen into with regard to Strode, who, he fays, was a great follower of Wickliffe, which is fo far from being true that he was one of the warmeft writers againft him, for which he is heavily cenfured by Bale, and as highly commended by Pitts. It is very probable that Wickliffe and Chaucer were very good friends, as they both owed the eminence of their refpective ftations to the fame patron, John D. of Lancafter. Sir John Gower, an eminent lawyer, poet, and philofopher, was alfo Chaucer's intimate companion, as appears from both their writings; the former was blind before the latter died, and furvived him only two years. But Thomas Occleve, or Hockliffe, a very ingenious man and a celebrated writer, was a great favourite of our Author's, and imitated him in his manner of writing. We are indebted to him for preferving Chaucer's picture, which he caufed to be drawn, in his book *De Regimine Principis*, and which he dedicated to King Henry V. and it is very evident from the verfes which refer to that picture that Chaucer had been a long time dead before he compofed that work. Another fcholar of his was the

That general applaufe with which his writings were received in his lifetime, and the high honours that were paid him by fuch as took a pride in ftyling themfelves his difciples after his death, ftamped fuch a mark of authority upon his Works as faved at leaft the greateft part of them from that oblivion which has covered the performances even of the moft celebrated authors of his time. In fpite of that fpirit of envy which his free and fevere fatires excited in the clergy, in fpite of his own Retraction, (whether genuine or fictitious is uncertain) in fpite of that authority which the church afterwards acquired, not of cenfuring only but of condemning and prohibiting what books they pleafed, his writings have efcaped, and not barely efcaped, but have been held in the greateft honour, and tranfmitted to pofterity with fuch care and circumfpection, and by the united la-

famous John Lydgate, a monk of Bury, who celebrates our Author's memory and writings in many of his pieces, and who outlived him forty years. Schogan alfo, who diftinguifhed himfelf by his farcaftical wit, was a profeffed admirer and imitator of Chaucer; but, as Leland obferves, if Chaucer, who fometimes ftyles Gower his mafter, excelled him in the fpirit and elegance of his verfes, Schogan, who acknowledged Chaucer for his mafter, was fo far from doing the like that he fell much below him. Yet fuch in all ages has been the pronenefs of mankind to encourage even the coarfeft kind of fatire, that Schogan wanted not his admirers, how little foever he refembled Chaucer. It is believed that he was perfonally acquainted with the celebrated Petrarch, but that he was perfectly mafter of his writings and thofe of Boccace is inconteftable.

bours of ſo many eminent perſons, as will do laſting honour to his memory, and plainly prove that true genius, extenſive learning, and a free ſpirit, are capable of commanding reverence through all ages, and preſerving that tranſcendent eſteem which is and ought to be the peculiar reward of ſuperiour merit *.

* *And ought to be the peculiar reward of ſuperiour merit.*] It muſt be allowed by all who are proper judges that the excellence attributed to Chaucer's writings by ſuch poets as came neareſt his own times did not ariſe in any degree either from cuſtom or complaiſance, but, on the contrary, was equally well founded in reaſon and on matter of fact; ſo that if we examine the ſentiments we ſhall find them more noble, ſhall diſcover a greater compaſs in his learning, and above all an harmonious ſweetneſs in his verſe, far beyond any thing that is to be met with in any poetical compoſitions for a whole century after his time. This is very candidly acknowledged by a ſtranger, who had as good a right as any to diſpute it, I mean that excellent old poet of Scotland, Gawin Douglas Biſhop of Dunkeld. Indeed Chaucer's reputation was as well eſtabliſhed in Scotland as in England, and I will take upon me to ſay that he was as much the Father of Poetry in that country as in this. It would render this note tedious to attempt giving a detail of the ſeveral printed editions of our Author's Works; it will be ſufficient to refer the reader to the contents of this vol. where this may be found. Caxton, the Father of Engliſh Printers, firſt printed many of Chaucer's Works, and printed them ſeveral times. In the reign of Hen. VIII. William Botteville, *alias* Thynne, Eſq. was the editor of a new edition of Chaucer, which in a very elegant diſcourſe he addreſſed to King Hen. VIII. In the ſame reign the induſtrious and learned Leland was a ſtudious reader and a moſt zealous admirer of the Works of Chaucer, in whoſe honour he wrote not one only but three copies of commendatory verſes. The ſame tribute of praiſe was beſtowed upon our Author by that excellent writer and great judge of ele-

We are not however to ſuppoſe that with all theſe great qualifications Chaucer could entirely eſcape the fury of falſe criticks, neither would it have been very much perhaps to his honour if he had, inaſmuch as all great poets ancient and modern have been ſo generally infeſted by theſe cavillers that they ſeem to be the neceſſary at-

gance in all kind of writing, Roger Aſcham, to whom we may add Sir Philip Sidney, who very judiciouſly obſerves, that it was equally ſtrange to him that Chaucer ſhould ſee ſo clearly in ſo miſty a time, and that in brighter ages men ſhould go ſo ſtumblingly after him. About this time Mr. Speght, by the aſſiſtance of the induſtrious John Stowe, publiſhed a new edition of our Author's Works, which were dedicated to Sir Robert Cecil, afterwards Earl of Saliſbury; and another ſtill more complete edition was promiſed by Mr. Francis Thynne, which never appeared. We have mentioned the commendations given him by the laborious John Fox and the moſt learned Camden: we muſt add to theſe the numerous teſtimonies of the immortal Spenſer, and the judicious apology of the ſuppoſed levities in Chaucer's Works by Mr. Francis Beaumont. The celebrated Sir Henry Savile mentions him with the higheſt reſpect; and the great Mr. Selden has given us a noble ſpecimen of that profound learning of which he was maſter, in juſtifying an epithet of our Author's. Sir Francis Kynaſton of Otely in Shropſhire publiſhed the firſt and ſecond books of a Latin verſion of Troilus and Creſeide, and completed his tranſlation of and notes upon the other three; and from ſome ſpecimens that are extant in the Gloſſary at the end of Mr. Urry's edition the world may well perceive how valuable a performance we are deprived of by the loſs or concealment of his manuſcript. It would be needleſs to ſwell this note with other particulars, but if ſome able hand would reſume the deſign of the late ingenious Mr. Ogle, and give us his Canterbury Tales in modern Engliſh, with a proper body of notes, there is no doubt that it would meet with a favourable reception.

tendants of an exalted reputation, and, like the ſlaves in a Roman triumph, make unwillingly an addition to that glory they meant to ſhade. Thoſe who have attacked Chaucer have not preſumed to queſtion his wit, for of this perhaps no writer of our nation ever had more; neither have they diſputed his poetical abilities, which certainly ſet his on a level with the greateſt names in antiquity; nor have they dared to throw any aſperſion on his learning, the extent of which is not greater than the maſterly degree of propriety with which it is every where applied: but the point to which they object is his changing, debaſing, or corrupting, our language, by introducing foreign words, as if the worth of all languages did not ariſe from their being thus enlarged and compounded, or as if Chaucer could have hurt the jargon of his time, which was not either Saxon, Norman, or French, but a mixture of all, by introducing words derived from the ſweeteſt and ſmootheſt language then uſed throughout Europe, I mean the Provencal. It is however juſt to obſerve that this reflection never made any great impreſſion, and that with the beſt and moſt elegant writers in our tongue Chaucer paſſes not only for a great improver, but for the very Father and Founder of it; and it is not a little to his honour that amongſt thoſe who are of this opinion we may reckon one of the soundeſt of our criticks, and one of the correcteſt writers in our language. So wide the difference is be-

tween the narrow notions of falſe wits and the fair and candid judgments that are given by the true *!

We cannot cloſe this life better than by giving a ſuccinct detail of our Author's family, or, to ſpeak with greater propriety, of his eldeſt ſon; for as to his ſecond ſon Lewis we have no account in what ſtation he lived, or where he died; but as to Thomas Chaucer, the office of Chief Butler to the King, granted to him in the laſt year of Richard II. was afterwards given him for life by letters patents from King Henry IV. and confirmed by Henry VI. In the 2d year of Henry IV. we find him Speaker of the Houſe of Commons, Sheriff of Oxfordſhire and of Berkſhire, and Conſtable

* *And the fair and candid judgments that are given by the true.*] The firſt writer that ventured to fall upon our Author was himſelf more than half a foreigner, and very far from being correct with reſpect to ſentiment or ſtyle. His very charge in the preſent caſe will prove what I have advanced: "The poet, "Geoffrey Chaucer," ſays he, "writing his poeſies in Engliſh, "is of ſome called the firſt illuminator of the Engliſh tongue. "Of their opinion I am not, though I reverence Chaucer as an "excellent poet for his time. He was indeed a great mingler "of Engliſh with French, unto which language (belike for "that he was deſcended of French or rather Waloon race) he "carried a great affection." But Dr. Skinner, in a very elegant Latin ſtyle, has attacked our Author with much more ſpirit and force; I ſhall give his words in Engliſh: "The poet Chaucer ſet the "worſt example, who by bringing whole ſhoals of French words "into our language, which was but too much adulterated be-"fore through the effects of the Norman conqueſt, deprived "it almoſt wholly of its native grace and ſplendour, laying on "paint over its pure complexion, and for a beautiful face ſub-"ſtituted a downright maſk."

of Wallingford-Castle and of Knaresborough-Castle during life. In the 4th year of the same reign the King directed an order to him, as Chief Butler, to deliver one hundred tons of wine to the Duke of Burgundy. In the 6th year of the same prince he was sent Ambassador into France; and the year following he went beyond the seas, joined in commission with the King's brother and Geoffrey Chaucer's nephew, Henry Beaufort Bishop of Winchester. In the 9th year of the same reign, on Tuesday the 25th of October, the Commons presented him their Speaker, as they did likewise in the 11th year, on Wednesday the 28th of January. In the 12th year of that reign Queen Jane granted to him, for his good service, the manors of Woodstock, Hannebrough, Wotton, and Stantesfield, during life; and in the 13th year, on the 5th of November, he was again presented Speaker, as he was in the 2d of Henry V. on Wednesday the second day of parliament; and in the same year he was sent by the King, in joint commission with Hugh Mortimer, to treat of a marriage with Catharine daughter to the Duke of Burgundy. He was likewise Ambassador in the 5th and 6th years of the same reign with Walter Hungerford, Steward of the Household, in the same affair; and again in the 6th year of the same reign he was Ambassador for peace with France; and he passed through several other publick stations, as appears by records. He resided chiefly at Ewelm in Oxfordshire,

which came to him by marriage, and there he died on the 28th of April 1434, and was buried in that pariſh church under a black marble tomb. By his wife Maud, or Matilda, who ſurvived him two years, he had one daughter named Alice, who was thrice married, firſt to Sir John Philips Knight, and afterwards to Thomas Montacute Earl of Saliſbury, who dying left her very rich. Her third huſband was the famous William de la Pole, Earl and afterwards Duke of Suffolk, who was firſt ſecretly married to the Counteſs of Hainault, by whom he had one daughter, but procuring a divorce from her he married this Alice, by whom he had one ſon, John Duke of Suffolk. Duke William lived chiefly at Dunnington and Ewelm, at the firſt of which Stowe ſays he built an hoſpital; but he ſeems to miſtake it for that founded by Adderbury, as before mentioned, for Dugdale takes no notice of any other, but at Ewelm he founded one called God's Houſe. He was an inſtance of the danger of a prince's favour, and the envy that attends it; for influencing the notions and the will of his maſter Henry VI. too much, and abuſing the power he had over that eaſy prince, he enraged the Commons to that degree that nothing leſs than his baniſhment could appeaſe them, which being agreed to the Yorkiſts, fearful of his return, ſeized him on his paſſage in Dover-road, and cut off his head upon the ſide of a cock-boat, and his body was buried at the Charter-Houſe at Hull. The

Duchefs furvived him feveral years, and after an honourable life died at Ewelm in the year 1475. Their fon John had iffue, according to Leland, John Earl of Lincoln, Edmund afterwards Duke of Suffolk, Richard, William, and a fifth fon, who was a fcholar in Gonvil-Hall in Cambridge. Edmund de la Pole, the laft of that name Duke of Suffolk, for being in treafon againft Henry VII. for which he had been once pardoned, forfeited his life to the crown, and was beheaded in the 7th year of that king's reign, whereby the eftates which Chaucer's family was poffeffed of came to the crown, and particularly the hofpital of Ewelm, which was by King James I. beftowed on the Phyfick Profeffor at Oxford, who is always mafter thereof in virtue of his office.

(C) *An Abstract of the historical passages of the life of Chaucer, from Tyrwhitt's edit.* 1775.

THE birth of Chaucer in 1328 has been settled, I suppose, from some inscription on his tombstone, signifying that he died in 1400 at the age of seventy-two. Of his birth itself we have no memorial, any more than of his parents (*a*). He calls himself a *Londenois*, or Londoner, in The Test. of L. b. i. fol. 325, and in another passage, fol. 321, speaks of the city of London as the place of his *engendrure*.

We are more in the dark about the place of his education. In his Court of Love, ver. 912, he speaks of himself under the name and character of "Philogenet—of Cambridge, Clerk." This is by no means a decisive proof that he was really educated at Cambridge, but it may be admitted, I think, as a strong

(*a*) Mr. Speght has referred to several records in which the name of Chaucer occurs. There is mention in the *Monast. Ang.* vol. iii. p. 326, of a Johannes le Chauser, *civis Londoniensis, an.* 1299, who may possibly have been our poet's grandfather. Though Leland says that he was *nobili loco natus*, Mr. Speght informs us that "in the opinion of some heralds—he "descended not of any great house, which they gather by his "armes." I am inclined to believe the heralds rather than Leland.——The name of Chaucer is explained [Life of Ch. Urr.] to signify a shoemaker, but it rather means *un faiseur de chausses ou culottiers*. Dict. de Lacombe, v. *Chaucier*. According to what is said to be the old spelling of it, *Chaucesir*, it might be not improbably derived from *Chausecire*, an office which still subsists under the title of Chafewax.

argument that he was not educated at Oxford, as Leland has ſuppoſed, without the ſhadow of a proof (*b*). The biographers however, inſtead of weighing one of theſe accounts againſt the other, have adopted both, and tell us very gravely that he was firſt at Cambridge, and afterwards removed from thence to complete his ſtudies at Oxford.

It were to be wiſhed that Mr. Speght had given us the date of that record in the Inner Temple (which he ſays a Mr. Buckley had ſeen) where "Geffrey Chaucer was fined two ſhillings for beating a Franciſcan "friar in Fleetſtreet" (*c*). Leland has alſo told us that our Author "*collegia Leguleiorum frequentavit* after his

(*b*) The ſingle circumſtance by which Leland has endeavoured to ſtrengthen his ſuppoſition that Chaucer was educated at Oxford is another ſuppoſition that he was born in Oxfordſhire or Berkſhire: the latter has been ſhewn above to be falſe.

(*c*) Though this be but a blind ſtory, it rather inclines me to believe that Chaucer was of the Inner Temple in the early part of his life before he went into the ſervice of Edward III. the circumſtance recorded is plainly a youthful ſally. On the contrary, Leland ſuppoſes his principal reſidence in the Inns of Court to have been after he had flouriſhed in France, about the laſt years of Richard II. which is totally incredible. Indeed Leland, through his whole account of our Author, ſeems to have conſidered him as living at leaſt twenty years later than he really did. He takes no notice of the beſt authenticated circumſtances of Chaucer's life in the time of Edw. III. and he repreſents him as highly eſteemed by Henry IV. and *his ſon, qui de Gallis triumphavit.* Henry V. was ſcarcely twelve years of age when Chaucer died.

"travels in France, and perhaps before." I muſt obſerve that theſe travels in France reſt entirely upon the authority of Leland, whoſe account is full of inconſiſtencies.

The firſt authentick memorial which we have of Chaucer is the patent in Rymer, 41 E. III. by which that king grants to him an annuity of 20 marks by the title of *Valettus noſter* (*d*). He was then in the 39th year of his age. How long he had ſerved the King in that or any other ſtation, and what particular

(*d*) *Our yeoman.* Mr. Speght, who omits this grant, mentions one of the ſame purport in the 45 Edward III. in which Chaucer is ſtyled *Valettus Hoſpitii*, which he tranſlates—Grome of the palace. By this he ſinks our Author as much too low as another writer has raiſed him too high, by tranſlating the ſame words—Gentleman of the King's Privy Chamber. [Life of Ch. Urr.] Valet, or yeoman, was the intermediate rank between ſquier and grome. See the note on ver. 101. See alſo the Will of Edward Duke of York, *ap. Rymer*, *an.* 1415, where his legacies *to his menial ſervants* are thus arranged——a un eſcuier L *s.* a [un] vadlet XX *s.* a un garc [on . . .] & a un page VI *s.* VIII *d* —*Valettus* is probably a corruption of *vaſſalettus*, the diminutive of *vaſſallus*; hence this title was alſo given (not as a name of ſervice) to young men of the higheſt quality before they were knighted;

> Il ot un fiz de ſa mulier,
> Ki neit pas uncore chivaler,
> *Vallet* eſteit et beaus et gent.----- *Roman d'Ipomedon.*

So that if Edward III. as Mr. Speght ſays, "did entitle Laurence Haſtings Lord of Aburganey——*Valectum noſtrum*," I ſhould gueſs that the ſaid lord was not "the king's grome, page, or ſervant," (as he ſuppoſes) or his yeoman, (as Chaucer was) but his ward.

merits were rewarded by this royal bounty (*e*), are points equally unknown.

(*e*) I ſhould have been glad to have met with any ground for ſuppoſing that this mark of royal favour was a reward of our Author's poetical merits. That Chaucer had before this time diſtinguiſhed himſelf by his poetical performances is almoſt certain. I have mentioned a ſuſpicion [n. on ver. 1920,] that The Aſſemb. of Foules alludes to the courtſhip of Blanche of Lancaſter by John of Gaunt, who married her in 1359, the 33 year of E. III.; and perhaps The Complaint of the Black Knight might be written for John of Gaunt during the ſame courtſhip. It is ſtill more probable that his tranſlation of The Roman de la Roſe, and his Troilus, were both compoſed before 1367, the era of which we are ſpeaking: but I think if the King had really patroniſed Chaucer as a poet we muſt have found ſome clear evidence of ſuch a connexion. If the one had been fond of verſes the other would certainly have given him ſome, eſpecially as he might have exerted his genius in the praiſe of ſo illuſtrious a patron without any neceſſity of flattering. If we conſider further that a few years after the King appointed him to be Comptroller of the Cuſtom of Wool, &c. in the port of London, with the following injunction in his patent—"ſo that the ſaid Geffrey write with his own hand his rolls "touching the ſaid office, and continually reſide there, and "do and execute all things pertaining to the ſaid office in his "own proper perſon, and not by his ſubſtitute,"——we ſhall probably be of opinion that his Majeſty was either totally inſenſible of our Author's poetical talents, or at leaſt had no mind to encourage him in the cultivation or exerciſe of them. It ſhould ſeem that Edward, though adorned with many royal and heroick virtues, had not the gift of diſcerning and patroniſing a great poet, a gift which, like that of genuine poetry, (if we may believe one who perhaps ſpoke feelingly upon the ſubject) is only beſtowed on the choſen few by the peculiar favour of Heaven;

--------neque enim, niſi carus ab ortu
Diis ſuperis, poterit magno faviſſe poetæ. *Milt. Manſus.*

From this time we find frequent mention of him in various publick inſtruments. In the 46 E. III. [*apud Rymer*] the King appoints him Envoy (with two others) to Genoa, by the title of *Scutifer noſter* (*f*). In the 48 E. III. he has a grant for life of a pitcher of wine daily [*ap. Rymer*] and in the ſame year a grant, during pleaſure, of the office of Comptroller of the Cuſtom of Wools, *&c.* in the port of London [*ibid.*] In the 49 E. III. the King grants to him the Wardſhip of Sir Edmond Staplegate's heir [mſſ. *Rymer*, E. III. vol. xi. n. 12.] for which he received 104*l.* [*ibid.* R. II. vol. i. n. 16.] and in the next year ſome forfeited wool to the value of 71*l.* 4*s.* 6*d.* [Life of Ch. Urr.] In the laſt year of Edw. III. he was ſent

I obſerve, however, that notwithſtanding the petrifying quality with which theſe cuſtomhouſe accounts might be expected to operate upon Chaucer's genius he probably wrote his Houſe of Fame while he was in that office: I gather this from b. ii. ver. 144, where the Eagle ſays to him———

For when thy labour al done is,
And haſt made all thy *rekenynges*,
In ſtede of reſt and of newe thynges
Thou goeſt home to thyne houſe anone, *&c.*

(*f*) *Our ſquier*; ſo that in the courſe of theſe five years our Author had been promoted from the rank of yeoman to that of ſquier, attendant upon the King. *Scutifer* and *armiger*, Lat. are ſynonymous terms for the French *Eſcuier*. The biographers thinking, I ſuppoſe, the title of Squier too vulgar, have changed it into Shieldbearer, as if Chaucer had the ſpecial office of carrying the King's ſhield.——Some obſervations have been made upon this appointment of Chaucer as Envoy to Genoa in The Diſcourſe, *&c.* n. 20.

to France with Sir Guichard D'Angle and Richard Stan, [or Sturry] to treat of a marriage between the Prince of Wales, Richard, and a daughter of the French king [Froiſſart, vol. i. chap. 325.]

In the next year, 1 R. II. his annuity of 20 marks was confirmed to him, and another annuity of 20 marks was granted to him in lieu of the pitcher of wine daily. [See the licenſe to ſurrender theſe grants in the Life of Ch. Urr.] It is probable too that he was confirmed in his office of Comptroller, though the inſtrument has not been produced (*g*). In the 11 of R. II. he had the King's licenſe to ſurrender his two grants of 20 marks each in favour of John Scalby (*h*).

(*g*) This is probable I think, becauſe Chaucer in his Teſtament of Love frequently alludes to his loſs of office as one of the greateſt misfortunes brought upon him by his *meddling* in thoſe diſturbances which happened in the city of London in the 7 of R. II. When he fled to avoid being examined in relation to theſe diſturbances (as he ſays, Teſt. of L. fol. 329, b.) he was probably ſuperſeded in his office.

(*h*) This licenſe reciting the two grants is printed in the Life of Ch. Urr. and the author of that life has obſerved that this ſurrender was probably occaſioned by our Author's diſtreſſed circumſtances. Either he deſpaired of procuring payment of his penſions, or perhaps wanted to raiſe a ſum of ready money. The ſame writer has extracted from The Teſt. of Love almoſt all that is now to be known of the hiſtory of this diſtreſs, which he aſcribes very truly to Chaucer's unfortunate engagements with that party in the city of London of which John of Northampton was at the head. What the real deſigns of that party were, and how a trifling city-riot, as it ſeems to have been, came to be treated as a rebel-

In the 13 of R. II. he appears to have been Clerk of the Works at Weftminfter, &c. and in the following year at Windfor (*i*). In the 17 R. II. the King grant-

lion, are points of great obfcurity. There is good ground to believe that Northampton was connected with the Duke of Lancafter. At his trial, in Auguft 1384, he contended that he ought not to be tried in the abfence of his lord the Duke: "Quo verbo," fays Walfingham, p. 310. "fufcitavit fufpicio- "nem finiftram tam vulgi quam procerum contra Ducem." He was condemned however to perpetual imprifonment, in which he remained till July 1390, when (according to the Monk of Evefham, p. 122,) "ad inftantiam Ducis Lancaftriæ, "Johannes Northampton——et focii fui nuper de Londoniis "banniti, reftituti funt ad priftinas libertates," the judgment againft him was reverfed in parliament the next year, *Rot. Parl.* 14 R. II. n. 36, and he was reftored to his lands, &c. the year following, *Rot. Parl.* 15 R. II. n. 33. This connexion of Northampton with the Duke of Lancafter will account for the part which Chaucer appears to have taken in this unhappy affair. He was very early attached to that duke, and was at this time married to a fifter of Catharine Swynford the Duke's miftrefs; and it is obfervable that the firft mark of royal favour which he received after his diftreffes was beftowed upon him at the fame time that Northampton received his pardon, and probably through the fame mediation.

(*i*) See *Tanner's Bib. Brit.* v. *Chaucer*, n. e. It may juftly be doubted whether thefe two offices together indemnified our Author for the lofs of his former office in the Cuftoms; that was probably a very lucrative one. He complains of "being "berafte out of dignitie of office, in which he made gatheringe "of worldly godes;" and in another place he fpeaks of himfelf as "once glorious in worldly welefulneffe, and having fuche "godes in welthe as maken men riche." [Teft. of Love, fol. 326, a. b.] But that he fhould ever have been poffeffed of lands and revenues to the yearly value almoft of a thoufand pounds (according to the tradition repeated by Mr. Speght) is quite incredible.

ed to him a new annuity of 20 *l.* [*ap. R.*] (*k*);—in the 21 his protection for two years [*ibid.*]—and in the 22 a pipe of wine annually [*ibid.*] In the next year, the 1 H. IV. his two grants of the annuity of 20 *l.* and of the pipe of wine, were confirmed to him [mſſ. *Rymer*, H. IV. vol. i. n. 27,] and at the ſame time he had an additional grant of an annuity of 40 marks, [*ibid.* n. 15.] He died, according to the inſcription on his tombſtone, in the beginning of the 2 H. IV. on the 25th of Oct. 1400.

Theſe I think are the principal facts in Chaucer's life which are atteſted by authentick evidences (*l*).

(*k*) If Chaucer was ever poſſeſſed of Dunnington-Caſtle in Berkſhire, (as his biographers ſuppoſe he was) he muſt have purchaſed it about this time, for it appears to have been in the poſſeſſion of Sir Richard Adderbury in the 16th year of Rich. II. *Monaſt. Ang.* ii. 474. We have no proof of any ſuch purchaſe, and the ſituation of his affairs makes it highly improbable. The tradition which Mr. Evelyn mentions in his Sylva, of an oak in Dunnington-park called Chaucer's oak, may be ſufficiently accounted for without ſuppoſing that it was planted by Chaucer himſelf, as the Caſtle was undoubtedly in the hands of Thomas Chaucer for many years.

(*l*) It appears further from the *Exitus*, *Paſch.* 4 R. II. [mſſ. Rymer, R. II. vol. ii. n. 3,] that Chaucer, on the 24 May 1381, received at the Exchequer a half year's payment of his own two annuities of 20 marks each, and alſo a half year's payment of an annuity of 10 marks, granted by E. III. and confirmed by R. II. to his wife Philippa, "nuper uni domicellarum Philippæ, nuper Reginæ Angliæ." The title given to her of *domicella* proves that ſhe was unmarried at the time of her being in the Queen's ſervice. There is a patent in Rymer, 43 E. III. by which the King, about four months after Queen Philippa's

We learn from himſelf, in his Treatiſe on the Aſtro-labe, that he had a ſon called Lowis, who was ten

death, grants annuities to nine of her *domicellæ*, *viz.* to four of them 10 marks, to two 5 pounds, and to three 5 marks. One of them is called Philippa Pykard, and might very well be ſuppoſed to be the lady whom Chaucer afterwards married, if it were not for two objections; 1. that the annuity granted to her is only 5 pounds, whereas Chaucer's wife appears by this record to have had one of 10 marks; and, 2. that the hiſtorians, though they own themſelves totally ignorant of the Chriſtian name of Chaucer's wife, are all agreed that her ſurname was Rouet, the ſame with that of her father and eldeſt ſiſter Catharine Swynford. The firſt objection might be got over by ſuppoſing that her annuity, though at firſt only 5 pounds, was increaſed (perhaps upon her marriage with Chaucer) to 10 marks. As to the other point, it is not impoſſible that the father and the eldeſt ſiſter, who was his heireſs, [See pat. 13. H. IV. p. 1. m. 35, *apud Rymer*] might bear the name of de Rouet (or de Roelt, as it is in the pat. 13 H. IV. juſt quoted) from ſome eſtate in their poſſeſſion, and yet the younger ſiſter might be called by the family-name of Pykard.—— If the records of payments at the Exchequer for the eleven years preceding 1381 are ſtill in being they may enable us to clear up theſe doubts, and alſo perhaps to aſcertain very nearly the time of Chaucer's marriage, as they will probably ſhew when he began to receive his wife's annuity. If this laſt point were aſcertained we ſhould know better what to think of the relation of Thomas Chaucer to our Author. Mr. Speght informs us "that "ſome held opinion that Thomas Chaucer was not the ſonne "of Geffrey;" and there are certainly many circumſtances which might incline us to that opinion. I was in hopes of meeting with ſome light upon this ſubject in a poem which Lydgate is ſaid to have written, entitled "A Complaint upon the "departure of Thomas Chaucer into France upon the Kynge's "Ambaſſate." A poem with this title is extant in mſ. *Harl.* 367, 33, in the handwriting of J. Stowe, but upon inſpection I found it to be a mere love-ballad, without the leaſt imaginable reference to Thomas Chaucer.

years of age in 1391. It is the only circumſtance, as I recollect, relating to his family of which he has informed us. A few other hiſtorical particulars relating to himſelf, which may be collected from his writings, have been taken notice of already; and perhaps a more attentive examination of his Works might furniſh a few more. We muſt be cautious however, in ſuch an examination, of ſuppoſing alluſions which Chaucer never intended, or of arguing from pieces which he never wrote as if they were his. We muſt not infer, from his repeated commendations of the daiſy-flower, that he was ſpecially favoured by Margaret Counteſs of Pembroke (*m*); and ſtill leſs ſhould

(*m*) I can find no other foundation for this notion; Mr. Speght, who firſt ſtarted it, ſays that "it may appeare in di-"vers treatiſes by him written, as in the Prologue of the "Legend of Good Women under the name of the Dayſie, and "likewiſe in a ballad beginning, *In the ſeaſon of Feverier.*" The ballad is among the additions made by J. Stowe to Chaucer's Works in 1561, and, like the greateſt part of thoſe additions, is *of very dubious authority*, to uſe the gentleſt terms: but ſuppoſing it genuine, there is nothing in it to make us believe that it had any reference to the Counteſs of Pembroke. That its commendations of the daiſy ought not to weigh with us is very plain from the other piece cited by Mr. Speght; for The Legende of Good Women, in which he imagines the Lady Margaret to be honoured under the name of the Daiſy, was certainly not written till at leaſt twelve years after that lady's death. [See The Diſcourſe, &c. n. 3, for the date of The Legende. The Counteſs Margaret muſt have died not later than 1370, as the earl's ſon by his ſecond wife Anne was about nineteen years of age when he was killed in a tourna-

we ſet him down as a *follower* of Alain Chartier (*n*), becauſe his editors have falſely aſcribed to him a tranſlation of one of Alain's poems.

ment in 1391. *Hollinſhed*, p. 471.] It is poſſible that *le dit de la fleur de lis et de la Marguerite*, by *Guillaume de Machaut*, [Acad. des Inſc. t. xx. p. 381,] and the *Dittie de la flour de la Margherite* by *Froiſſart*, [ibid. t. x. p. 669,] (neither of which had the leaſt relation to the Counteſs of Pembroke) might furniſh us with the true key to thoſe myſtical compliments which our poet has paid to the daiſy-flower.

(*n*) Leland was the firſt author of this ſtory, which is totally inconſiſtent with chronology. The time of Alain's birth has not been ſettled with preciſion, but he was certainly living near 40 years after Chaucer's death, which makes it morally impoſſible that the latter ſhould have *followed* him in his attempts to poliſh his native language. Inſtead therefore of ſuppoſing, from the tranſlation of *La belle Dame ſans Mercie*, that Chaucer *imitated* Alain Chartier, we ſhould rather conclude that he was not the *author* of that tranſlation, which indeed in mſ. *Harl.* 372 is expreſsly attributed to a Sir Richard Ros.—— I will juſt take notice of another opinion, (which has been propagated upon as little foundation) that Chaucer *imitated* the Provencal poets. Mr. Rymer, who I believe firſt made the diſcovery, ſpeaks only of his having *borrowed* from their *language*, [*View of Trag.* p. 70,] but Mr. Dryden found out that he *compoſed after their manner*, particularly his tale of The Flower and the Leaf, [*Pref. to Fables.*] Mr. Warton alſo thinks that The Houſe of Fame was originally a Provencal compoſition, *Hiſt. of Eng. Po.* p. 389, 458.—How far Chaucer's *language* was *borrowed* has been conſidered already in the Eſſay, &c. part i. I will only add here that I have not obſerved in any of his writings a ſingle phraſe or word which has the leaſt appearance of having been *fetched* by him from the ſouth of the Loire. With reſpect to the *manner* and *matter* of his compoſitions, till ſome clear inſtance of *imitation* be produced I ſhall be ſlow to believe that in either he ever *copied* the poets of Provence, with whoſe works I apprehend he had very little if any acquaintance.

PREFACE

To Mr. Tyrwhitt's edition of The Canterbury Tales.

The first object of this publication was to give the text of The Canterbury Tales as correct as the mss. within the reach of the editor would enable him to make it.

The account of former editions in the Appendix to this Preface (*A*) will shew that this object had hitherto been either entirely neglected, or at least very imperfectly pursued: the editor therefore has proceeded as if his Author had never been published before: he has formed the text throughout from the mss. and has paid little regard to the readings of any edition except the two by Caxton, each of which may now be considered as a manuscript. A list of the mss. collated or consulted upon this occasion is subjoined (*B*).

In order to make the proper use of these mss. to unravel the confusions of their orthography, and to judge between a great number of various readings, it was necessary to inquire into the state of our language and versification at the time when Chaucer wrote, and also, as much as was possible, into the peculiarities of his style and manner of composition; nor was it less necessary to examine with some attention the work now intended to be republished, to draw a line between the imperfections which may be supposed to have been left in it by the Author, and those which have crept into it since, to distinguish the parts where the Author appears as an inventor from those where he is merely a translator or imitator, and throughout the whole to trace his allusions to a variety of forgotten books and obsolete customs.

As a certain degree of information upon all thefe points will be found to be neceffary even for the reading of The Canterbury Tales with intelligence and fatisfaction, the editor hopes he fhall be excufed for fuppofing that the majority of his readers will not be difpleafed with his attempt to fhorten at leaft the labour of their inquiries, by laying before them fuch parts of the refult of his own refearches as he judges will be moft conducive to that purpofe; he has therefore added to the text, 1. An Effay on the Language and Verfification of Chaucer *; 2. An Introductory Difcourfe to The Canterbury Tales; and, 3. Notes, into which he has thrown an account of the moft material various readings, illuftrations of particular paffages, and explanations of the moft uncommon words and phrafes, efpecially fuch as are omitted or ill explained in the Gloffary to Urry's edition.

He had once an intention of adding a gloffary and a life of Chaucer: from the former of thefe undertakings he was deterred † by the bulk to which this publication had already fwollen, and by the confideration that a gloffary adapted to a part only of Chaucer's writings muft neceffarily be a very imperfect work, the utility of which would by no means

* In this Effay is contained a fhort view of Englifh poetry to the time of Chaucer, the trouble of compiling which the editor might perhaps have faved himfelf if he had forefeen that Mr. Warton's Hiftory of Englifh Poetry would have appeared fo foon. Both the Effay and the Introductory Difcourfe were printed before Mr. Warton's book was publifhed, which is mentioned not fo much to obviate any fufpicion of plagiarifm as to apologize for whatever defects there may be in either of thofe treatifes from a want of the lights which that learned and elegant writer has thrown upon all parts of this fubject.

† This Gloffary has fince been publifhed. See vol. xiv.

be proportionable to the labour employed in compiling it. If this attempt to invite the attention of the publick to their too much neglected bard ſhould ſo far ſucceed as to bring to light any mſſ. by the help of which, together with thoſe in the Bodleian and other libraries, the remainder of the writings of Chaucer might be reſtored to a tolerable degree of purity, a good gloſſary to the whole would be a moſt uſeful work, and indeed would anſwer all the purpoſes of a dictionary of our ancient language.

With reſpect to a life of Chaucer he found, after a reaſonable waſte of time and pains in ſearching for materials, that he could add few *facts* to thoſe which have already appeared in ſeveral lives of that poet; and he was not diſpoſed either to repeat the comments and inventions by which former biographers have endeavoured to ſupply the deficiency of facts, or to ſubſtitute any of his own for the ſame laudable purpoſe: inſtead therefore of a formal life of his Author, which upon theſe principles muſt have been a very meagre narration, he has added to this Preface a ſhort Abſtract of the Hiſtorical Paſſages of the Life of Chaucer with remarks *, which may ſerve to ſeparate for the future thoſe paſſages from others which have nothing to recommend them to credit but the ſingle circumſtance of having been often repeated.

He will detain the reader no longer than juſt to deſire his indulgence for the errata which are ſpecified in the annexed table: thoſe of the printer are diſtinguiſhed by Italicks; of the reſt the editor muſt take the ſhame to himſelf: they are owing partly to his having omitted to inſert the true readings in the

* See this vol. page 66—76.

copy prepared for the preſs, and partly to his having imprudently adopted ſome leſs authorized readings, and even conjectures, inſtead of the readings of the beſt mſſ. When the paſſages here pointed out are corrected he does not recollect to have deviated from the mſſ. (except perhaps by adding the final *n* to a very few words) in any one inſtance of which the reader is not advertiſed in the notes.

(A) APPENDIX TO PRECEDING PREFACE.

An account of former editions of The Canterbury Tales.

THE art of printing had been invented and exercised for a considerable time in most countries of Europe before the art of criticism was called in to superintend and direct its operations; it is therefore much more to the honour of our meritorious countryman, William Caxton, that he chose to make The Canterbury Tales one of the earliest productions of his press, than it can be to his discredit that he printed them very incorrectly. He probably took the first mſ. that he could procure to print from, and it happened unluckily to be one of the worst in all respects that he could possibly have met with. The very few copies of this edition which are now remaining (*a*) have no date, but Mr. Ames supposes it to have been printed in 1475 or 1476.

It is still more to the honour of Caxton that when he was informed of the imperfections of his edition he very readily undertook a second, "for to satisfy "the Auctour," (as he says himself) "where as to-"fore by ygnoraunce *he* had erryd in hurtyng and dyf-"famyng his book." His whole account of this matter, in the Preface to this second edition, is so clear and ingenuous that I shall insert it below in his own words (*b*). This edition is also without date, except

(*a*) The late Mr. West was so obliging as to lend me a complete copy of this edition, which is now, as I have heard, in the King's library. There is another complete copy in the library of Merton College, which is illuminated, and has a ruled line under every printed one, to give it the appearance, I suppose, of a mſ. Neither of those books, though seemingly complete, has any preface or advertisement.

(*b*) Pref. to Caxton's 2d edit. from a copy in the library of

that the Preface informs us that it was printed six years after the first.

St. John's Col. Oxford, p. *Ames*, 55.—"Whiche book I have "dylygently oversen, and duly examyned to the ende that it "be made accordyng unto his owen makyng; for I fynde many "of the sayd bookes, whiche wryters have abrydgyd it, and "many thynges left out, and in some places have sette certayn "versys that he never made ne sette in hys booke; of whiche "bookes so incorrecte was one broughte to me vi. yere passyd "whiche I supposed had ben veray true and correcte, and ac-"cordyng to the same I dyde do enprynte a certayn number "of them, whyche anon were solde to many and dyverse gen-"tlymen, of whom one gentylman cam to me, and sayd that "this book was not accordyng in many places unto the book "that Gefferey Chaucer had made; to whom I answered, "that I had made it accordyng to my copye, and by me was "nothyng added ne mynusshyd. Thenne he sayd, he knewe "a book whyche hys fader had and moche lovyd, that was "very trewe, and accordyng unto hys owen first book by hym "made; and sayd more, yf I wold enprynte it agayn he wold "gete me the same book for a copye, how be it he wyst well "that hys fader wold not gladly departe fro it. To whom I "sayd, in caas that he coude gete me suche a book, trewe and "correcte, yet I wold ones endevoyre me to enprynte it agayn, "for to satisfy the Auctour, where as tofore by ygnoraunce I "erryd in hurtyng and dyffamyng his book in dyverce places, "in setting in somme thynges that he never sayd ne made, and "leving out many thynges that he made, whyche ben requy-"site to be sette in it. And thus we fyll at accord, and he full "gentylly gate of hys fader the said book, and delyvered it to "me, by whiche I have corrected my book, as heere after alle "alonge by the ayde of almighty God shal folowe, whom I hum-"bly beseche," &c.—Mr. Lewis, in his Life of Caxton, p. 104, has published a minute account of the contents of this edition from a copy in the library of Magdalen College Cambridge, but without deciding whether it is the first or the second edition—it is undoubtedly the second, but the Preface is lost. There is an imperfect copy of this edition in the Museum, and another

Ames mentions an edition of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales collected by William Caxton, and printed by Wynken de Worde at Weſtmeſtre in 1495, folio. He does not appear to have ſeen it himſelf, nor have I ever met with any other authority for its exiſtence, which however I do not mean to diſpute: if there was ſuch an edition we may be tolerably ſure that it was only a copy of Caxton's.

This was certainly the caſe of both Pynſon's editions: he has prefixed to both the introductory part of Caxton's proheme to his ſecond edition without the leaſt alteration. In what follows he ſays that he purpoſes to imprint his book [in the firſt edition] "by a copy of the ſaid Maſter Caxton," and [in the ſecond] "by a copy of William Caxton's imprint-"ing" (*c*). That the copy mentioned in both theſe paſſages, by which Pynſon purpoſed to imprint, was really Caxton's ſecond edition, is evident from the ſlighteſt compariſon of the three books. Pynſon's firſt edition has no date, but is ſuppoſed (upon good grounds I think) to have been printed not long after 1491, the year of Caxton's death: his ſecond edition (*d*) is dated in 1526, and was the firſt in which

in the library of the Royal Society: both together would not make a complete one.

(*c*) See the prohemies to Pynſon's 1ſt and 2d edit. in the Preface to Urry's Chaucer. There is a complete copy of Pynſon's 1ſt edit. in the library of the Royal Society.

(*d*) I venture to call this Pynſon's 2d edit. though Ames (from ſome notes of Bagford) ſpeaks of editions in 1520 and 1522. He does not appear to have ſeen them himſelf. Mr. Weſt had a copy of the edition of 1526, in which the name of the printer and the date of the impreſſion are regularly ſet down at the end of The Canterbury Tales; after that follow Troilus and Creſeide and The Boke of Fame, at the end of which laſt

a collection of some other pieces of Chaucer was added to The Canterbury Tales.

The next edition which I have been able to meet with was printed by Thomas Godfray in 1532. If this be not the very edition which Leland speaks of as printed by Berthelette (*e*), with the assistance of

is a note copied from Caxton's edition of the same book, with this addition, "and here followeth another of his workes;" but in Mr. West's copy nothing followed. The writer of the Preface to ed. Urr. seems to have had the use of a copy of this edition in 1526, which contained some other pieces of Chaucer's, and several by other hands. See the Pref. to *ed. Urr.*

(*e*) I think it necessary to state Leland's account of the editions of Chaucer in his own words, from Tanner's *Bibl. Brit.* v. *Chaucer*. Non alienum meo erit instituto palam facere, *Gulielmum Caxodunum*, hominem nec indiligentem nec indoctum, et quem constat primum Londini artem exercuisse typographicam, *Chauceri* opera, quotquot vel pretio vel precibus comparare potuit, *in unum volumen collegisse*. Vicit tamen Caxodunicam editionem *Bertholetus* noster operâ *Gulielmi Thynni*, qui multo labore, sedulitate, ac curâ usus in perquirendis vetustis exemplaribus, multa *primæ* adjecit *editioni*. Sed nec in hac parte caruit *Brianus Tucca*, mihi familiaritate conjunctissimus, et Anglicæ linguæ eloquentiâ mirificus, suâ gloriâ, editâ in postremam impressionem *præfatione* elimatâ, luculentâ, eleganti. Sequar igitur codicem *paucis abhinc annis* impressum, et promissum adponam syllabon. He then gives a syllabus of the Works of Chaucer contained in that edition, as follows: *Fabulæ Cantianæ* xxiv, quarum duæ solutâ oratione scriptæ; sed *Petri Aratoris fabula*, quæ communi doctorum concensu Chaucero, tanquam vero parenti, attribuitur, in utrâque editione, quia malos sacerdotum mores vehementer increpavit, suppressa est. *De arte amandi*, alias *Romaunce of the Rose*, &c.— Before I make any remarks upon this account I must observe that it was drawn up by Leland before the year 1540: this appears from his New-Year's-Gift to Henry VIII. in the xxxvii yeare of his raygne, (1 Jan. 1546,) in which he says expressly

2

Mr. William Thynne, (as I rather suspect it is) we may be assured that it was copied from that. Mr.

that he had spent the last six years in travelling about the kingdom, "all his other occupations intermitted," [edit. 1745, p. 22, prefixed to Leland's Itin. v. i.] so that his book *De Viris Illustribus*, which he speaks of as finished in the same piece, p. 21, must have been finished before he set out upon his travels. I will observe too, by the way, that the biographers of Leland seem to have confounded these last six years travels with his former travels in execution of the commission granted to him by Henry VIII. to search the libraries of monasteries, colleges, &c. That commission was granted in the year 1533, 25 H. VIII. but how many years he spent in the execution of it there is no authority that I can find for determining with precision.—In the account above-quoted Leland is certainly mistaken in saying that Caxton *collected* the Works of Chaucer *into one volume*. He printed two editions of The Canterbury Tales by themselves, as has been shewn above; he also printed Boethius, Troilus and Cressida, and The Book of Fame, but each in a separate volume, and some smaller pieces of Chaucer, intermixed with several of Lydgate, &c. in another volume, of which the contents may be seen in Middleton's Dissert. p. 263, n. *d*; but it does not appear that he ever attempted to collect these separate publications into one volume.—Leland is also inaccurate, at least in representing the edition by Thynne as coming next after that by Caxton, without taking any notice of the intermediate editions by Pynson, and especially that in 1526, in which an attempt was really made to collect the Works of Chaucer into one volume.——It may appear presumptuous to go further, and to charge him with inaccuracy in his description of that very edition by Thynne which he seems to have had before his eyes, but I am much inclined to suspect (as I have intimated in the text) that the edition which he speaks of as printed by Berthelette was really printed by Godfray, and that the Preface of Brianus Tucca (Sir Brian Tuke) which he commends so much, was nothing else but the prefatory address or dedication to the

Thynne's Dedication to Henry VIII. ſtands at the head of it, and the great number of Chaucer's Works,

King, which is prefixed to Godfray's and other later editions in the name of Mr. William Thynne. The miſtake may not have been ſo extravagant as it appears to be at firſt. It is poſſible that Berthelette might be concerned in putting forth the edition of 1532 though it was printed by Godfray; and it is very probable that the Dedication, (which is in ſuch a ſtyle as I think very likely to be commended by Leland) though ſtanding in the name of Mr. William Thynne, was compoſed for him by Sir Brian Tuke. Mr. Thynne himſelf, I apprehend, was rather a lover than a maſter of theſe ſtudies.—In ſupport of this ſuſpicion I obſerve firſt, that the ſyllabus which Leland has given of the contents of Berthelette's edition agrees exactly enough with the contents of the edition by Godfray, a few ſmall pieces only being omitted by him. Second, the date of Godfray's edition in 1532 agrees perfectly with what Leland ſays of the edition in queſtion, (*viz.* that it was printed *a few years before*) and with the probable date of Mr. Thynne's edition, which appears to have been publiſhed not earlier than 1530, and certainly not later than 1532. It was not publiſhed earlier than 1530, becauſe *the French Grammar made by an Engliſhman*, mentioned in the Dedication, muſt mean, in all probability, *L'eſclairciſement de la langue Francoiſe* by John Palſgrave, the printing of which was finiſhed by John Hawkins 18 July 1530, and the privilege granted on the 2 September following. It was not later than 1532, becauſe the Dedication appears in Godfray's edition of that year. Third, if Berthelette had printed Mr. Thynne's edit. 1531, (we will ſuppoſe) it is inconceivable that Godfray ſhould ſet about another edition ſo immediately as to be able to publiſh it the very next year. Though the printers of that age had a very imperfect notion, I apprehend, of copyright at Common Law, they may be preſumed to have had always a certain common ſenſe which would reſtrain them from undertaking a new impreſſion of a book while a conſiderable number of copies of a former impreſſion remained

never before publiſhed, which appear in it, fully entitles it to the commendations which have always

unfold, whether theſe copies belonged to themſelves or to others. Beſides, Godfray's edition has no appearance of a haſty piratical impreſſion; it is upon a fine paper, and the types and preſs-work are remarkably neat and elegant. Fourth, I think we have Berthelette's own authority for believing that he did not print Mr. Thynne's edit. of Chaucer. In the Preface to Gower's *Confeſſio Amantis*, which he publiſhed in this very year 1532, after having mentioned Troilus and Creſeide, he goes on thus; "The whiche noble warke, and many other of the ſayde "Chauſer's that never were before imprinted, and thoſe that "very fewe men knewe and fewer hadde them, be now of late "put forthe together in a fayre volume." There can be no doubt that in this paſſage he refers to Mr. Thynne's edit. and if he had printed it himſelf I think he would certainly have claimed the honour of it. At the ſame time the favourable manner in which he ſpeaks of it, would lead one to imagine (as has been ſuggeſted above) that he had ſome concern in it. —Upon the whole, therefore, I am perſuaded that the edit. by Godfray in 1532 is the edition which Leland ſpeaks of as printed by Berthelette. I have given above what I conjecture to have been the probable grounds of his miſtake. But indeed when we recollect the hurry in which this work of Leland muſt have been compiled, and that it was left by him unfiniſhed, we need not ſeek for any other cauſes of the inaccuracies with which it abounds. In the latter part of the paſſage cited above he ſpeaks of The Ploughman's Tale by the title of *Petri Aratoris Fabula*, confounding it, in the title at leaſt, with Pierce Ploughman's Viſions; for I do not ſuppoſe that he meant to attribute the Viſions to Chaucer, though in fact the one might as well be attributed to him as the other.—Notwithſtanding the immoderate length of this note I muſt not ſuppreſs another teſtimony which may be produced in favour of the exiſtence of an edition of Chaucer by Mr. Thynne diſtinct from that printed by Godfray. Mr. Speght in his Life of Chaucer has the following paſſage; "M. William Thynne, in his firſt printed booke of Chaucer's

been given to Mr. Thynne's edition on that account. Accordingly it was several times reprinted as the

"Works with one columbe on a side, had a tale called The Pilgrim's Tale, which was more odious to the clergie than the speach of the Ploughman. The tale began thus, *In Lincolneshire fast by a fenne—Standeth a religious house, who doth it kenne.* The argument of which tale, as also the occasion thereof, and the cause why it was left out of Chaucer's Works, shall hereafter be shewed, if God permit, in M. Fran. Thynne's Comment upon Ch. and the tale itselfe published, *if possibly it can be found.*"—It must be allowed that this description of Mr. Thynne's first edition, "with *one columbe on a side*, and *a tale* called *The Pilgrim's Tale*," does not suit the edition printed by Godfray, which is in two columns, and has no Pilgrim's tale: but I observe that Mr. Speght does not pretend to have seen this book; he even doubts whether the tale *can be found.* If therefore I should be able to prove that the tale which he speaks of could not possibly be in Mr. Thynne's first edition, I presume no great stress will be laid upon the other part of his evidence, in which he supposes that edition to have been printed with only one column on a side.——It appears very strange at first sight that The Ploughman's Tale (according to Leland) should have been suppressed in Mr. Thynne's edit. *quia malos sacerdotum mores vehementer increpavit*, and that he should have inserted this Pilgrim's Tale, which as Mr. Speght tells us was still *more odious to the clergie.* A few years after, when the reformation was further advanced, in 1542, The Ploughman's Tale is inserted among Chaucer's Works and The Pilgrim's Tale is suppressed! But there is no occasion to insist upon these little improbabilities. Though Mr. Speght did not know where to find The Pilgrim's Tale, and the printer of the edit. in 1687 assures us that he had searched for it "in the publick libraries of both Universities," and also "in all private libraries that he could have access unto," I have had the good fortune to meet with a copy *; it is entitled *The Pylgrymse Tale*, and begins thus;

* The copy of which I speak is in the black letter, and seems to have once made part of a volume of miscellaneous poems in 8vo. The first

ſtandard edition of Chaucer's Works, without any material alteration, except the inſertion of The Plough-

In Lincolneſhyr, faſt by the fene,
Ther ſtant an hows, and you yt ken,
And callyd Sempynham of religion,
And is of an old foundation, &c.

There can be no doubt, I think, that this is the piece of which Mr. Speght had received ſome confuſed intelligence: it ſeems to have been mentioned by Bale among Chaucer's Works in in the following manner, *Narrationes diverſorum, lib.* i. *In comitatu Lincolnienſi fuit*——*Script. Brit.* p. 526, edit. 1559. But it is impoſſible that any one who had read it ſhould aſcribe it to Chaucer; he is quoted in it twice by name, fol. 33, and fol. 45, and in the latter place the reference ſeems to be made to a printed book. The reader ſhall judge——

He ſayd he durſt not it diſcloſe,
But bad me reyd The Romant of the Roſe,
The thred leafe juſt from the end,
To *the ſecund page* ther he did me ſend,
He prayd me thes vi ſtavis for to marke,
Whiche be *Chaucer's* awn hand warke.
¶ Thus moche woll our boke ſygnify
That while Peter hath maſtery, &c.

[Then follow four more lines from Chaucer's R.R. v. 7263—8, *ed. Urr.*] It is not uſual, at leaſt, to cite mſſ. by *the leafe* and *the page*. But if this citation was really made from a printed book The Pilgrim's Tale muſt have been written after Mr. Thynne's edition, for Chaucer's tranſlation of The Romant of the Roſe was firſt printed in that edition. Another paſſage will fix the date of this compoſition ſtill more clearly. In fol. 39, 40, are the following lines;

leaf is numbered xxxi, and the laſt xlv. The Pilgrim's Tale begins about the middle of fol. xxxi. and continues to the end of the fragment, where it breaks off imperfect. The firſt leaf has a running title ——*Venus The Court of*—and contains the ten laſt lines of one poem, and another whole poem of twenty lines, before The Pilgrim's Tale.— This curious fragment was purchaſed at the auction of Mr. Weſt's library, in a lot (NO *1040) of *ſundry fragments of old black-letter books*, by Mr. Herbert of Gulſton's Square, who very obligingly permitted me to examine it.

man's Tale in 1542, of which I have ſpoken in the Diſcourſe, &c. n. 32.

As my buſineſs here is ſolely with The Canterbury Tales, I ſhall take no notice of the ſeveral miſcellaneous pieces by Chaucer and others which were added to them by Mr. Thynne in his edition, and afterwards by Stowe and Speght in the editions of 1561, 1597, and 1602. With reſpect to The Canterbury Tales, I am under a neceſſity of obſerving that upon the whole they received no advantage from the edit. of 1532: its material variations from Caxton's ſecond edition are all I think for the worſe: it confounds the order of The Squier's *(f)* and The Frankelein's (*g*) Tales, which Caxton in his ſecond edition had ſet right: it gives The Frankelein's Prologue to the Merchant, in addition to its own proper Prologue (*h*): it produces for the firſt time two Prologues, the one to The Doctour's, and the other to The Shipman's Tale, which are both evidently ſpurious (*i*); and it brings back the lines of ribaldry (*k*)

> *Perkin Werkek* and Jak Straw,
> And now of late *our cobler* the dawe.

One would not expect to find any mention of Perkin Warbeck in a work attributed to Chaucer; but paſſing that over, I think it is plain that *our cobler*, in the ſecond line, means the leader of the Lincolnſhire rebels in 1536, who, as Hollinſhed tells us, page 941, "called himſelf *Captaine Cobler*, but was indeed a monk named Doctor Mackarell." The Pilgrim's Tale therefore was not written till *after* 1536, and conſequently could not poſſibly be in Mr. Thynne's firſt edit. which, as has been ſhewn above, was printed *at lateſt* in 1532.

(*f*) See the Diſcourſe, &c. § 23, and note on ver. 10293.

(*g*) *Ibid.* § 25, and note on ver. 10985.

(*h*) See the ſame ſection and note.

(*i*) See them in all the edit. ſince 1532.

(*k*) See the note on ver. 10227. The lines themſelves are in all the common editions.

in The Merchant's Tale which Caxton in his second edition had rejected upon the authority of his good manuscript.

However, this edition of 1532, with all its imperfections, had the luck, as I have said, to be considered as the standard edition, and to be copied not only by the booksellers in their several edits. (*l*) of 1542, 1546, 1555, and 1561, but also by Mr. Speght (the first editor in form after Mr. Thynne who set his name to his work) in 1597 and 1602. In the Dedicat. to Sir Robert Cecil, prefixed to this last edition, he speaks indeed of having "reformed the whole work, "both by old written copies and by Ma. William "Thynne's praiseworthy labours;" but I cannot find that he has departed in any material point from those editions which I have supposed to be derived from Mr. Thynne's; in the very material points abovementioned, in which those edits. vary from Caxton's second, he has followed *them:* nor have I observed any such verbal varieties as would induce one to believe that he had consulted any good mf. They who have read his Preface will probably not regret that he did not do more towards correcting the text of Chaucer.

In this state The Canterbury Tales remained (*m*)

(*l*) There are some other editions mentioned by Ames without date, but it is probable that upon inspection they would appear to be one or other of the editions whose dates are here given. It seems to have been usual to print books in partnership, and for each partner to print his own name to his share of the impression. See *Ames*, p. 252. A Bible is said to be printed in 1551 by Nicholas Hill—" at the cost and charges of certayne honest menne of the occupacyon, *whose names be upon* "*their bokes.*"

(*m*) It may be proper just to take notice that Mr. Speght's edit. was reprinted in 1687, with an advertisement at the end,

till the edition undertaken by Mr. Urry, which was publiſhed ſome years after his death in 1721. I ſhall ſay but little of that edition, as a very fair and full account of it is to be ſeen in the modeſt and ſenſible Preface prefixed to it by Mr. Timothy Thomas (*n*), upon whom the charge of publiſhing Chaucer devolved, or rather was impoſed, after Mr. Urry's death. The ſtrange licenſe in which Mr. Urry appears to have indulged himſelf of lengthening and ſhortening Chaucer's words according to his own fancy, and of even adding words of his own, without giving his readers the leaſt notice, has made the text of Chaucer in his edition by far the worſt that was ever publiſhed.

in which the editor pretended to publiſh from a mſ. *the concluſion of* The Cook's Tale, *and alſo of* The Squire's Tale, *which in the printed books are ſaid to be loſt, or never finiſhed by the Author.*——Theſe concluſions may be ſeen in the Preface to ed. Urr. Whoever the editor was I muſt do him the juſtice to ſay that they are both really to be found in mſ. The firſt is mſ. B. α. and the other in mſ. B. δ. from which Hearne has alſo printed it, as a choice diſcovery, in his letter to Bagford, *App. to R. G.* page 601. If I thought the reader had any reliſh for ſuch ſupplements to Chaucer I could treat him from mſ. B. α. with at leaſt thirty more lines, which have been inſerted in different parts of The Cook's Tale by the ſame hand that wrote this concluſion. It ſeems to have been an early though very unſucceſsful attempt to ſupply the deficiencies of that tale before any one had thought of tacking Gamelyn to it.

(*n*) I learn this from a mſ. note in an interleaved copy of Urry's Chaucer preſented to the Britiſh Muſeum by Mr. William Thomas, a brother, as I apprehend, of Mr. T. Thomas. T. Thomas was of Chriſt-Church Oxford, and died in 1751, aged fifty-nine. In another note Mr. W. Thomas informs us that the Life of Chaucer in that edition was very uncorrectly

Since this there has been no complete edition of The Canterbury Tales. A volume in 8vo, containing the Prologue and The Knighte's Tale, with large explanatory notes, &c. was publiſhed in 1737 by a gentleman (as I am informed) who has ſince diſtinguiſhed himſelf by many other learned and uſeful publications. He appears to have ſet out upon the only rational plan of publiſhing Chaucer, by collating the beſt mſſ. and ſelecting from them the genuine readings; and accordingly his edition, as far as it goes, is infinitely preferable to any of thoſe which preceded it.

drawn up by Mr. Dart, and corrected and enlarged by W. T. (*i. e.* himſelf.) The ſame Mr. W. Thomas has taken a great deal of unneceſſary pains in collating that copy of Urry's edit. with ſeveral mſſ. The beſt part of the various readings ſerves only to correct the arbitrary innovations which Mr Urry had introduced into the text. He has employed himſelf to better purpoſe upon the gloſſary, where he has made many emendations and additions which may be of conſiderable uſe if ever a new gloſſary to Chaucer ſhall be compiled.

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AN ESSAY

ON THE LANGUAGE AND VERSIFICAT. OF CHAUCER.

The Contents.

Introduction. The different judgments of the Language and Versification of Chaucer stated. Plan of this Essay in three parts. 1. To vindicate Chaucer from the charge of having corrupted the English Language by too great a mixture of French with it. 2. To make some observations upon the real state of our Language in his time. 3. To apply those observations and others towards illustrating the real nature of his Versification.

Part the first. The French Language introduced into England before the conquest, § 1.; confirmed and propagated by the new establishments at the conquest, § 2.; was the ordinary Language of the court, § 3.; was carried into the provinces by the great barons and military commanders, § 4.; and especially by the clergy, § 5.; who both secular and regular were chiefly foreigners, § 6.; the French Language continued to be much used as late as the reign of Edward III. § 7.; conclusion, that the mixture of French in Chaucer's writings was not owing to any affectation of his, but to the causes above-mentioned, which in his time had generally introduced the Norman-Saxon instead of the Saxon dialect, the same mixture being observable in other contemporary authors, § 8.

Part the second. The proposed observations upon the English Language confined to the actual state of it in the time of Chaucer, § 1.; and divided so as to consider separately the Saxon and Norman parts of it, § 2.; the Saxon part considered in grammatical order: 1. The prepositive article. 2. Nouns substantive and adjective. 3. Pronouns. 4. Verbs and participles. 5. The indeclinable parts of speech, § 3. The Norman part considered generally, § 4; and more particularly with respect to nouns substantive and adjective, verbs and participles, § 5.; additional causes of the introduction of a great number of French terms in the English Language, § 6.

Part the third. Preliminary observations upon English poetry. The form of English poetry probably borrowed from the Normans, there being no traces of rhyme or metre among the Saxons before the conquest. The metres and rhyme of modern poetry derived from the Latin, § 1.; progress of English poetry to the reign of Henry II.; early attempts at rhyming, § 2. Few English poets known between the reign of Henry II. and that of Henry III. § 3. The *Ormulum* written in verses of fifteen syllables without rhyme, § 4. The number of rhymers increased between the last mentioned period and the time when Chaucer began to write, § 5. State of our poetry at that time, § 6. Account of the metres then in use, § 7.; of those used by Chaucer, § 8. The heroick metre probably introduced by him either from France or

Italy, § 9. A knowledge of the ancient pronunciation of our Language necessary in order to form a judgment of the Versification of Chaucer, § 10. How a critick in the age of Augustus would have proceeded in judging of the metre of Ennius, § 11. The same method recommended with respect to Chaucer. General reasons for believing that he understood and practised the ordinary rules of metre, § 12. The offences against metre in an English verse enumerated, as arising from 1. a superfluity, 2. a deficiency of syllables, and 3. a misplacing of accents, § 13. No *superfluity* of syllables in Chaucer's verses, § 14. The seeming *deficiencies* in his metre may generally be supplied by restoring the ancient pronunciation of certain syllables, § 15.; and especially of the *e* feminine. Reasons for believing that the final *e* in our ancient Language was pronounced like the *e* feminine of the French, § 16. The third kind of irregularity, arising from a *misplacing of accents*, may be rectified, in many instances, by accenting certain words in a manner different from that now in use, and more agreeable to the French practice. Proofs that such a mode of accentuation was used by Chaucer in words of Saxon as well as of French original. The early poets in France and Italy not exact in the disposition of their accents, § 17. Illustration of the foregoing theory by a grammatical and metrical analysis of the first eighteen lines of The Canterbury Tales, § 18.

AN ESSAY, &c.

THE Language of Chaucer has undergone two very different judgments. According to one (1) he is the "well of English undefiled;" according to the other he has corrupted and deformed the English idiom by an immoderate mixture of French words (2). Nor do

(1) Spenser, F. Q. b. IV. c. ii. st. 32.

(2) Verstegan, c. 7. "Some few ages after [the conquest] "came the poet Geffery Chaucer, who writing his poesies in "English is of some called the first illuminator of the English "tongue. Of their opinion I am not, though I reverence Chaucer as an excellent poet for his time. He was indeed *a great* "*mingler of English with French*, unto which language (belike "for that he was descended of French or rather Waloon race) "he carried a great affection."

Skinner, Etymol. L. A. Præf. "Ex hoc malesano novitatis "pruritu, Belgæ Gallicas voces passim civitate sua donando "patrii sermonis puritatem nuper non leviter inquinârunt, et

the opinions with respect to his Versification seem to have been less discordant. His contemporaries (3), and they who lived nearest to his time, universally extol him as the "chief poete of Britaine," "the "flour of poetes," &c. titles which must be supposed to imply their admiration of his metrical skill as well as of his other poetical talents; but the later criticks (4), though they leave him in possession of the same sounding titles, yet they are almost unani-

"Chaucerus poeta, pessimo exemplo, *integris vocum plaustris* "*ex eadem Gallia in nostram linguam invectis*, eam, nimis antea "a Normannorum victoria adulteratam, omni fere nativa "gratia et nitore spoliavit."

(3) Lydgate, Occleve, *et al.* See the Testimonies prefixed to this volume.

(4) I shall only quote Dryden, Pref. to his Fables. "The "verse of Chaucer, I confess, is not harmonious to us—They "who lived with him, and some time after him, thought it mu-"sical, and it continues so even in our judgment, if compared "with the numbers of Lydgate and Gower, his contempora-"ries.—It is true I cannot go so far as he who published the last "edition of him, [Mr. Speght,] for he would make us believe "the fault is in our ears, and that there were really ten syllables "in a verse where we find but nine: but this opinion is not "worth confuting; it is so gross and obvious an errour that "common sense (which is a rule in every thing but matters of "faith and revelation) must convince the reader that equality "of numbers in every verse which we call Heroick was either "not known or not always practised in Chaucer's age. It were "an easy matter to produce some thousands of his verses which "are lame for want of half a foot, and sometimes a whole one, "and which no pronunciation can make otherwise."—This peremptory decision has never since (that I know) been controverted, except by Mr. Urry, whose design of restoring the metre of Chaucer by a collation of mss. was as laudable as his execution of it has certainly been unsuccessful.

moufly agreed that he was either totally ignorant or negligent of metrical rules, and that his verſes (if they may be ſo called) are frequently deficient by a ſyllable or two of their juſt meaſure.

It is the purpoſe of the following Eſſay to throw ſome light upon both theſe queſtions. Admitting the fact that the Engliſh of Chaucer has a great mixture of French in it, I hope to ſhew that this mixture (if a crime) cannot fairly be laid to his charge: I ſhall then proceed to ſtate ſome obſervations upon the moſt material peculiarities of the Norman-Saxon or Engliſh Language, as it appears to have been in general uſe in the age of Chaucer; and, laſtly, applying theſe obſervations to the poetical parts of The Canterbury Tales, as they are faithfully printed in this edition from the beſt mſſ. which I could procure, I ſhall leave it to the intelligent reader to determine whether Chaucer was really ignorant of the laws, or even of the graces, of Verſification, and whether he was more negligent of either than the very early poets in almoſt all languages are found to have been.

PART THE FIRST.

§ 1. In order to judge, in the firſt place, how far Chaucer ought to be charged as the importer of the many French words and phraſes which are ſo viſible in all his writings, it will be neceſſary to take a ſhort view of the early introduction and long prevalency of the French language in this country before his time. It might be ſufficient perhaps for our purpoſe to begin this view at the conqueſt; but I cannot help obſerving from a contemporary hiſtorian, that ſeveral years before that great event the language of France had been introduced into the court of Eng-

land, and from thence among the people. The account which Ingulphus gives of this matter is (5), that Edward, commonly called The Confeſſor, having been educated at the court of his uncle Duke Richard II. and having reſided in Normandy many years, became *almoſt a Frenchman*: upon his return from thence, and acceſſion to the throne of England in 1043, he brought over with him a number of Normans, whom he promoted to the higheſt dignities; and (according to Ingulphus) under the influence of the King and his Norman favourites the whole nation began to lay aſide their Engliſh faſhions, and imitate the manners of the French in many things; in particular, he ſays expreſsly that *all the nobility in their courts began to ſpeak French as a great piece of gentility.*

§ 2. This faſhion, however, of ſpeaking French, having been adopted only in compliance with the caprice of the reigning prince, would not probably have ſpread very wide or laſted very long; but at the revolution, which followed ſoon after in 1066, the language of the Norman conqueror was interwoven with the new political ſyſtem (6), and the

(5) Ingulph. Hiſt. Croyl. p. 62. ed. Gale. "Rex autem Edwardus natus in Anglia, ſed nutritus in Normania et diutiſſime immoratus, pene in Gallicum tranſierat, adducens ac attrahens de Normania plurimos, quos variis dignitatibus promotos in immenſum exaltabat.—Cœpit ergo tota terra ſub Rege et ſub aliis Normanis introductis Anglicos ritus dimittere, et Francorum mores in multis imitari, *Gallicum* [*ſcilicet*] *idioma omnes Magnates in ſuis curiis tanquam magnum gentilitium loqui*, chartas et chirographa ſua more Francorum conficere, et propriam conſuetudinem in his et in aliis multis erubeſcere."

(6) Robert Holkot (as quoted by Selden, *ad Eadmer*, p. 189,)

ſeveral eſtabliſhments which were made for the ſupport and ſecurity of the one all contributed, in a greater or leſs degree, to the diffuſion and permanency of the other.

§ 3. To begin with the court. If we conſider that the King himſelf, the chief officers of ſtate, and by far the greateſt part of the nobility, were all Normans, and could probably ſpeak no language but their own, we can have no doubt that French (7)

ſays that the Conqueror—"deliberavit quomodo linguam "Saxonicam poſſet deſtruere, et Angliam et Normaniam in "idiomate concordare."—But Holkot wrote only in the 14th century, and I do not find that the earlier hiſtorians impute to the King ſo ſilly a project. On the contrary Ordericus Vitalis [l. iv. 520,] aſſures us that William—"Anglicam locutionem "plerumpque ſategit ediſcere: ut ſine interprete querelam "ſubjectæ legis poſſet intelligere, et ſcita rectitudinis unicuique "(prout ratio dictaret) affectuoſe depromere. Aſt a perceptione "hujuſmodi durior ætas illum compeſcebat, et tumultus mul-"timodarum occupationum ad alia neceſſario adtrahebat."—And ſeveral of his publick inſtruments, which are ſtill extant in Saxon, [*Hickes G. A. S. p.* 164—*Præf. p.* xv, xvi,] prove that he had no objection to uſing that language in buſineſs; ſo that it ſeems more natural to ſuppoſe that the introduction of the French language was a conſequence only and not an object of his policy.

(7) I apprehend that long before this time the Daniſh tongue had ceaſed to be ſpoken in Normandy; it was never general there, as appears from a paſſage of Dudon, l. iii. p. 112. Duke William I. gives this reaſon for ſending his ſon Richard to be educated at Baieux; "Quoniam quidem Rotomagenſis civitas "Romanâ potius quam Daciſcâ utitur eloquentiâ, et Bajoca-"cenſis fruitur frequentius Daciſcâ linguâ quam Romanâ, volo "igitur ut ad Bajocacenſia deferatur quantocius mœnia," &c. If we recollect that the Daniſh ſettlers under Rollo were few in compariſon with the original inhabitants, and had probably ſcarce any uſe of letters among them, we ſhall not be ſurpriſed

was the ordinary language of the court. The few Saxons who for some time (8) were admitted there must have had the strongest inducements to acquire the same language as soon as possible, not merely for the sake of apprehending and answering insignificant questions in the circle, but because in that age affairs of the greatest importance were publickly transacted in the King's court, and there they might be called upon to answer for their possessions and even for their lives. In an ecclesiastical synod held in the presence of the King in 1072, the venerable Bishop of Worcester, Wulstan, (whose *holy simplicity*, as the historian calls it (9), seems to have preserved him

that they did not preserve their language for above two or three generations.—From two other passages of the same Dudon we learn that the Danish language, while it lasted in Normandy, was very similar to the Saxon, [p. 99,] and yet different from it, [p. 100,] *qualem decet esse sororem*.

(8) After the death of Edwin and the imprisonment of Morcar in 1070, we do no not read of any Saxon earl except Waltheof, and he was executed for misprision of treason about three years after, *Orderic. Vit.* l. iv. p. 536. It is singular that Waltheof, according to the Saxon law, suffered death for the concealment of that treason for which Roger de Breteuil, Earl of Hereford, being tried *secundum leges Normannorum*, could only be punished by a forfeiture of his inheritance and perpetual imprisonment, *Id.* p. 535. From this time (says Ingulphus, p. 70,) "Comitatus et Baronias, Episcopatus et Prælatias, totius terræ "suis Normanis Rex distribuit, et vix aliquem Anglicum ad ho"noris statum vel alicujus dominii principatum ascendere per"misit."

(9) Will. Malmesb. l. iii. p. 118. "Hic sancta simplicitas beati "Vulstani, &c." The story which follows perfectly justifies this character. Matt. Paris [*ad. an.* 1095,] says that in another synod there was a formal design of deposing Wulstan, and that he was saved only by a miracle. He was accused "simplicitatis

from the degradation which almoſt all the other Engliſh prelates underwent) was obliged to defend the rights of his ſee by an interpreter "a monk" (according to the ſame (10) hiſtorian) "of very little "eloquence, but who had a ſmattering of the Nor- "man language."

§ 4. If we conſider further that the great barons, to whom William (11) diſtributed a large ſhare of his conqueſt, when releaſed from their attendance in the King's court retired to courts of their own, where they in their turn were ſurrounded by a numerous train of vaſſals, chiefly their own countrymen, we may be ſure that the French language travelled with them into the moſt diſtant provinces, and was uſed by them not only in their common converſation but in their civil contracts, their judical proceedings, and even in the promulgation of their laws (12). The many

"et illiteraturæ;"—"et quaſi homo idiota, qui linguam Gal- "licanam non noverat, nec regiis conſiliis intereſſe poterat, "ipſo Rege conſentiente et hoc dictante, decernitur deponen- "dus."

(10) *Ibid.* "Ita datâ benedictione Monacho, minimæ fa- "cundiæ viro, ſed Normannicæ linguæ ſciolo, rem perorans "obtinuit."

(11) There is a curious detail of part of this diſtribution in Ordericus Vitalis, l. iv. p. 521, 2, which concludes thus:—— "aliiſque advenis, qui ſibi cohæſerant, magnos et multos ho- "nores contulit; et in tantum quoſdam provexit, ut multos "in Angliâ ditiores et potentioras haberent clientes, quam eo- "rum in Neuſtriâ fuerant parentes." There is an account in the *Monaſt. Angl.* t. i. p. 400, of the Conqueror's giving the whole county of Cumberland to Ranulph de Meſchines, and of the diviſion which Ranulph made of it among his relations and followers, who appear to have been all foreigners.

(12) The ancient earls had a power of legiſlation within their counties. William of Malmeſbury, ſpeaking of William Fitz-

castles which William built (13) in different parts of the island must also have contributed very much to the propagation of the French language among the natives, as it is probable that the foreigners, of whom the garrisons were (14) entirely composed, would insist upon carrying on all their transactions with the neighbouring country in their own language.

§ 5. But the great alteration which from political motives was made in the state of the clergy at that

Osberne, Earl of Hereford, says, "Manet in hunc diem in Comitatu ejus apud Herefordum legum quas statuit inconcussa firmitas; ut nullus miles pro qualicunque commisso plus septem solidis solvat; cum in aliis provinciis ob parvam occasiunculam in transgressione præcepti herilis, viginti vel viginti quinque pendantur." L. iii. p. 105.

(13) Ordericus Vitalis [L. iv. p. 511,] observes that before the conquest "Munitiones, quas Castella Galli nuncupant, Anglicis provinciis paucissimæ fuerant: et ob hoc Angli, licet bellicosi fuerint et audaces, ad resistendum tamen inimicis extiterant debiliores." William at his landing placed garrisons at Pevensey and Hastings; after the battle he took possession of Dover and left a garrison there. He caused *firmamenta quædam* to be made at London, and built a strong citadel at Winchester. Upon his return from Normandy, after the first insurrection of the English, he built a castle within the city of Exeter, another at Warwick, and another at Nottingham. In the city of York "munitionem firmavit, quam delectis militibus custodiendam tradidit." At Lincoln, Huntingdon, and Cambridge, "castra locavit, et tutelam eorum fortissimis viris commendavit." He had also garrisons at Montacute in Somersetshire, and at Shrewsbury. He built fortifications at Chester and Stafford. We read also of castles at Arundel and Stutesbury at this time, and Norwich was so strong as to stand a siege of three months. *Ord. Vit.* p. 500—535.

(14) Orderic. Vital. l. iv. p. 506, "Custodes in castellis strenuos viros ex Gallis collocavit, et opulenta beneficia, pro quibus labores et pericula libenter tolerarent, distribuit."

time must have operated perhaps more efficaciously than any other cause to give the French language a deep root in England. The Conqueror seems to have been fully apprised of the strength which the new government might derive from a clergy more closely attached to himself by a community of interests than the native English were likely to be; accordingly from the very beginning of his reign all ecclesiastical preferments, as fast as they became vacant, were given to his Norman chaplains; and, not content to avail himself of the ordinary course of succession, he contrived (15), upon various charges of real or pretended

(15) See the transactions of the council held at Winchester in the year 1070, *ap. Flor. Vigorn.* p. 636. Having spoken of the degradation of Stigand Archbishop of Canterbury, and Agelmar Bishop of the East Saxons, he proceeds thus; "Abbates "etiam aliqui ibi degradati sunt, operam dante rege ut quamplures ex Anglis suo honore privarentur, *in quorum locum* "*suæ gentis personas subrogavit, ob confirmationem sui (quod* "*noviter acquisierat) regni.* Hic et nonullos, tam episcopos "quam Abbates, *quos nulla evidenti causa nec concilia nec leges* "*seculi damnabant*, suis honoribus privavit, et usque ad finem "vitæ custodiæ mancipatos detinuit, suspicione, ut diximus, "tantum inductus novi regni."——In confirmation of what is said here and in the text, if we examine the subscriptions to an ecclesiastical constitution in 1072, *ap. Will. Malm.* l. iii. p. 117, we find that the two archbishops, seven bishops out of eleven, and six abbots out of twelve, were foreigners; and in about five years more the four other bishopricks, and five at least of the other six abbies, were in the hands of foreigners.——Another ecclesiastical constitution made at this time has very much the appearance of a political regulation: it orders "that the bishops' seats shall be removed from towns to cities;" and in consequence of it the see of Litchfield was removed to Chester, that of Selesey to Chichester, that of Elmham to Thetford, and afterwards to Norwich, that of Shireburne to Salisbury, and

irregularities, to remove ſeveral of the Engliſh biſhops and abbots, whoſe places were in like manner immediately ſupplied by foreigners. In ſhort, in the ſpace of a very few years all the ſees of England were filled with Normans, or ſtrangers naturalized (if I may ſo ſay) in Normandy, and the greateſt part of the abbies in the kingdom were under governors of the ſame deſcription.

§ 6. It muſt be allowed that the confeſſed ſuperiority (16) in literature of the Norman clergy over the Engliſh at that time furniſhed the King with a ſpecious pretext for theſe promotions; and it is probable that the prelates who were thus promoted made uſe of the ſame pretext to juſtify themſelves in diſpoſing of all their beſt benefices among their friends and countrymen: that this was their conſtant practice is certain: nor were the new abbots leſs induſtrious

that of Dorcheſter to Lincoln, *Will. Malm.* l. iii. p. 118. When the King had got a ſet of biſhops to his mind he would wiſh to have them placed where their influence could be of moſt ſervice to him.

(16) Ordericus Vitalis, l. iv. p. 518, ſays that the Normans at the conqueſt found the Engliſh *agreſtes et pene illiteratos;* and he imputes, with ſome probability, the decay of learning among them, from the time of Beda and others, to the continual ravages and oppreſſions of the Danes. See alſo *William of Malmeſbury*, l. iii. p. 101, 2. It may be obſerved too, from Continuat. Hiſt. Croyland, by Peter of Blois, p. 114, that the firſt regular lectures (of which we have any account) at Cambridge were read there by four foreign monks, who had come over into England with Jeffrey Abbot of Croyland, formerly Prior of St. Evroul: they are ſaid to have read "diverſis in locis a ſe diviſi et formam Aurelianenſis ſtudii ſecuti," three of them in grammar, logick, and rhetorick, and the fourth in theology.

to ſtock their convents (17) with foreigners, whom they invited over from the continent partly perhaps for the pleaſure of their ſociety, and partly (as we may ſuppoſe) in expectation of their ſupport againſt the cabals of the Engliſh monks. And when the great barons, following the royal example, applied themſelves to make their peace with the church by giving her a ſhare of their plunder, it was their uſual cuſtom to begin their religious eſtabliſhments with a colony from ſome Norman monaſtery (18).

§ 7. In this ſtate of things, which ſeems to have continued (19) with little variation to the time of Ed-

(17) See the preceding note. There was no great harmony at firſt between the Engliſh monks and their new governors. See the proceedings at Glaſtonbury under Thurſtin, [*Will. Malm.* l. iii. p. 110,] and at Canterbury againſt Wido, [*Chron. Saxon.* p. 179, 180, *ed. Gibſon.*]

(18) The Conqueror had put Goiſbert, a monk of Marmontier, at the head of his new foundation of Battle-Abbey, [*Ord. Vital.* l. iv. p. 505.] In like manner Roger de Montgomery, Earl of Shrewſbury, ſent for monks from Sées to begin his abbey at Shrewſbury, [*Id.* l. v. p. 581.] Walter Eſpec alſo brought over monks of Clervaulx to fill his two abbies of Rivaulx and Wardun, [*Ailr. Rievall. ap.* x. *Script.* p. 338.]——Beſide theſe and many other independent foundations, which were in this manner opened for the reception of foreign monks in preference to the natives, a conſiderable number of religious houſes were built and endowed as cells to different monaſteries abroad, and as ſuch were conſtantly filled by detachments from the ſuperiour ſociety; they are frequently mentioned in our hiſtories under the general name of the *Alien Priories*; and though ſeveral of them, upon various pretexts, had withdrawn themſelves from their foreign connexions, and been made denizens, no leſs than one hundred and forty remained in 1414, which were then all ſuppreſſed, and their revenues veſted in the crown. See the *Liſt. Monaſt. Angl.* v. i. p. 1035.

(19) I ſuppoſe that during this whole period of above 250 years the Engliſh language was continually gaining ground by

ward III. it is probable that the French and English languages subsisted together throughout the kingdom, slow and almost imperceptible degrees, in proportion nearly as the English natives were emerging from that state of depression in which they were placed by the conquest: we have no reason to believe that much progress was made in either of these matters before the reign of King John. The loss of Normandy, &c. in that reign, and the consequent regulations of Hen. III. and Louis IX. by which the subjects of either crown were made incapable of holding lands in the dominions of the other, [*Matth. Paris, ad an.* 1244.] must have greatly diminished the usual conflux of Normans to the English court; and the intestine commotions in this country under John and Henry III. in which so many of the greater barons lost their lives and estates, must eventually have opened a way for the English to raise themselves to honours and possessions, to which they had very rarely before been admitted to aspire.—In the year 1258, the 42 Hen. III. we have a particular instance (the first I believe of the kind) of attention on the side of government to the English part of the community. The letters patent which the King was advised to publish in support of the Oxford provisions were sent to each county in Latin, French, and English, [*Annal. Burton*, p. 416.] One of them has been printed from the patent-roll, 43 Henry III. n. 40. m. 15, by Somner in his *Dict. Sax.* v. *Unnan*, and by *Hearne*, *Text Roff.* p. 391. At the same time all the proceedings in the business of the provisions appear to have been carried on in French, and the principal persons in both parties are evidently of foreign extraction.——If a conjecture may be allowed in a matter so little capable of proof, I should think it probable that the necessity which the great barons were under at this time of engaging the body of the people to support them in their opposition to a new set of foreigners, chiefly Poitevins, contributed very much to abolish the invidious distinctions which had long subsisted between the French and English parts of the nation. In the early times after the conquest, if we may believe Henry of Huntingdon, [L. vi. p. 370,] *to be called an Englishman was a reproach*: but when the Clares, the Bohuns, the Bigods, &c. were raising armies for the expulsion of fo-

the higher orders both of the clergy and laity (20) ſpeaking almoſt univerſally French, the lower retain-

reigners out of the kingdom, they would not probably be unwilling to have themſelves conſidered as natives of England; accordingly Matthew Paris, [p. 833,] calls Hugh Bigod (a brother of the Earl Marſhall) *virum de terra Anglorum naturalem et ingenuum*; and in another paſſage, [p. 851,] he appropriates the title of *alienigenæ* to thoſe foreigners *qui Reginæ attinentes per eam introducti fuerant in Angliam*; and ſo perhaps the word ought generally to be underſtood in the tranſactions of that reign: none but perſons born out of England were then eſteemed as foreigners. ——— About the ſame time we find an archbiſhop of York objecting to clerks (recommended to benefices by the Pope) becauſe they were "ignorant of the Engliſh language," [*Mat. Par.* p. 831,] which ſeems to imply that a knowledge of that language was then conſidered among the proper qualifications of an eccleſiaſtick; but that it was not neceſſarily required, even in the parochial clergy, appears from the great number of foreign parſons, vicars, &c. who had the King's letters of protection in the 25 year of Edw. I. See the *Liſts in Prynne*, t. i. p. 709---720.

(20) The teſtimony of Robert of Glouceſter (who lived in the times of H. III. and E. I.) is ſo full and preciſe to this point that I truſt the reader will not be diſpleaſed to ſee it in his own words, or rather in the words of that very incorrect mſ. which Hearne has religiouſly followed in his edition:

Rob. Glouc. p. 364.

Thus come lo! Engelond into Normannes honde,
And the Normans ne couthe ſpeke tho *bote her owe* (a) ſpeche,
And ſpeke French as *dude atom* (b), and here chyldren dude al ſo teche,
So that hey men of thys lond, that of her blod come,
Holdeth alle thulke ſpeche that hii of hem nome.
Vor bote (c) a man couthe French, *me tolth* (d) of hym well *lute*;
Ac (e) lowe men holdeth to Englyſs and and to her *kunde* ſpeche *yute* (f).

(a) *But their own.*
(b) *Did at home.*
(c) *For but.*
(d) *Men told.—lute*, little.
(e) *But.—kunde*, natural.
(f) *Yet.*

ing the use of their native tongue, but also frequently adding to it a knowledge of the other. The general inducements which the English had to acquire the French language have been touched upon above; to which must be added, that the children who were put to learn Latin were under a necessity of learning French at the same time, as it was the constant

Ich wene ther ne be man in world contreyes none,
That ne holdeth to her kunde speche, bote Engelond one.
Ac well me wot vor to conne bothe wel yt ys,
Vor the more that a man con the more worth he ys.

I shall throw together here a few miscellaneous facts in confirmation of this general testimony of Robert of Gloucester.—A letter of Hugh Bishop of Coventry, preserved by Hoveden [p. 704,] assures us that William Bishop of Ely, Chancellor and Prime Minister to Richard I. *linguam Anglicanam prorsus ignorabat.*——In the reign of Henry III. Robert of Gloucester intending, as it should seem, to give the very words of Peter Bishop of Hereford, (whom he has just called "a Frensh bishop,") makes him speak thus—*Par Crist*, he sede, *Sir Tomas, tu is maveis. Meint ben te ay fet.* Rob. Glouc. p. 537.——There is a more pleasant instance of the familiar use of the French language by a bishop as late as the time of Edward II. Louis, consecrated Bishop of Durham in 1318, was unfortunately very illiterate—"laicus; Latinum non intelligens, sed cum difficultate "pronuncians. Unde, cum in consecratione suâ profiteri debuit, quamvis per multos dies ante instructorem habuisset, "legre nescivit: et cum, auriculantibus [f. articulantibus] "aliis, cum difficultate ad illud verbum *metropoliticæ* pervenisset, et diu anhelans pronunciare non posset, dixit in Gallico; "*Seit pur dite.*—Et cum similiter celebraret ordines, nec illud "verbum *in ænigmate* proferre posset, dixit circumstantibus; "*Par Seint Lowys, il ne fu pas curteis, qui ceste parole ici escrit.*" *Hist. Dunelm. ap. Wharton, Ang. Sac.* t. i. p. 761.—The transactions at Norham in 1291, the 20 Ed. I. with respect to the Scottish succession, appear to have been almost wholly carried

practice in all schools from the conquest (21) till about the reign of Edward III. to make the scholars

on in French, for which it is difficult to account but by supposing that language to have been the language of the court in both nations. [See *the Roll de Superior. Reg. Angl. in Prynne*, t. i. p. 487, *et seq.*] Edward's claim of the superiority is first made by Sir Roger Brabanson, *Sermone Gallico*, and afterwards the Bishop of Bath and Wells, and the king himself, speak to the assembly of English and Scots in the same language. [*Ibid.* p. 499, 501.]——The answers of the Bishop of Durham to the Pope's nuncios *in Gallico*, [*Walt. Hemingf. ad an.* 1295,] may be supposed to have been out of compliance to the cardinals, (though, by the way, they do not appear to have been Frenchmen) but no such construction can be put upon the following fact related by Matthew of Westminster. [*ad an.* 1301, p. 438.] The Archbishop of Canterbury informs the Pope that he had presented his Holinesses' letters to the king in a full court, *quas ipse dominus rex reverenter recipiens, eas publice legi coram omnibus*, et in Gallicâ linguâ fecerat patenter exponi.

(21) Ingulphus, a contemporary writer, informs us that this practice began at the conquest, [p. 71.] "Ipsum etiam idioma "[Anglicum] tantum abhorrebant, [Normanni,] quod leges "terræ statutaque Anglicorum regum linguâ Gallicâ tractarentur; *et pueris etiam in scholis principio literarum grammatica Gallice ac non Anglice traderentur*; modus etiam scribendi Anglicus omitteretur, et modus Gallicus in chartis et "in libris omnibus admitteretur." And Trevisa, the translator and augmenter of Higden's Polychronicon in the reign of Richard II. gives us a very particular account of its beginning to be disused within his own memory. The two passages of Higden and Trevisa throw so much light upon the subject of our present inquiry that I shall insert them both at length from ms. *Harl.* 1900, as being more correct in several places than the ms. from which Dr. Hickes formerly printed them in his *Pref. ad Thes. Ling. Septent.* p. xvii.——*Higden's Polychron.* b. I. c. lix. "This apayringe of the birthe tonge is by cause of "tweye thinges; oon is for children in scole, azenes the usage

construe their Latin lessons into French. From the discontinuance of this practice, as well as from other causes, the use, and probably the knowledge, of French as a separate language received a considerable check. In the 36 year of Edward III. a law (22) was

" and maner of alle other naciouns, beth compelled for to leve " her owne langage, and for to constrewe her lessouns and her " thingis a Frensche, and haveth siththe that the Normans " come first into England. Also gentil mennes children beth " ytauzt for to speke Frensche from the tyme that thei beth " rokked in her cradel, and kunneth speke and playe with a " childes brooche; and uplondish men wole likne hem self to " gentilmen, and fondeth with grete bisynesse for to speke " Frensche, for to be the more ytold of."—*Trevisa.* "This " maner was myche yused to fore the first moreyn, and is sith- " the some del ychaungide; for John Cornwaile, a maistre of " grammer, chaungide the lore in grammer scole and con- " struction of Frensch into Englisch, and Richard Pencriche " lerned that maner teching of him, and other men of Pencriche; " so that now the zere of oure Lord a thousand thre hundred " foure score and fyve, of the secunde King Rychard after the " conquest nyne, in alle the gramer scoles of Englond children " leveth Frensch, and construeth and lerneth an Englisch, and " haveth thereby avauntage in oon side and desavauntage in " another. Her avauntage is, that thei lerneth her gramer in " lasse tyme than children were wont to do; desavauntage is, " that now children of gramer scole kunneth no more Frensch " than can her lifte heele; and that is harm for hem, and thei " schul passe the see and travaile in strange londes, and in ma- " ny other places also: also gentilmen haveth now mych ylefte " for to teche her children Frensch."

(22) This celebrated statute is said by Walsingham [p. 179,] to have been made *ad petitionem communitatis;* but no such petition appears upon the parliament-roll, and it seems rather to have been an act of grace moving from the King, who on the same day entered into the fiftieth year of his age; " unde in " suo Jubileo populo suo se exhibuit gratiosum." *Walf. ib.* It is remarkable too that the cause of summons at the beginning of

made "that all pleas in the courts of the king, or "of any other lord, ſhall be pleaded and judged in "the Engliſh tongue;" and the preamble recites, "that the French tongue" (in which they had been uſually pleaded, &c.) "was too much unknown" or diſuſed; and yet for near threeſcore years after this (23) the proceedings in parliament (with very

this parliament was declared by Sir Henry Greene, Chief Juſtice, *en Engleis*, (ſays the record for the firſt time) and the ſame entry is repeated in the records of the parliaments 37 and 38 Edw. III. but not in thoſe of 40 Edw. III. or of any later parliament, either becauſe the cuſtom of opening the cauſe of ſummons in French was reſtored again after that ſhort interval, or perhaps becauſe the new practice of opening it in Engliſh was ſo well eſtabliſhed (in the opinion of the clerk) as not to need being marked by a ſpecial entry.——The reaſons aſſigned in the preamble to this ſtatute for having pleas and judgments in the Engliſh tongue might all have been urged, with at leaſt equal force, for having the laws themſelves in that language: but the times were not yet ripe for that innovation; the Engliſh ſcale was clearly beginning to preponderate, but the ſlowneſs of its motion proves that it had a great weight to overcome.

(23) All the parliamentary proceedings in Engliſh before 1422, the firſt of Henry VI. are the few which follow.——The confeſſion of Thomas Duke of Glouceſter, taken at Calais by William Rickhill, and recorded in parliament, *inter Plac. Coron.* 21 Rich. II. n. 9. It is printed in *Tyrrel*, v. iii. p. 793.—Some paſſages in the depoſition of Richard II. printed at the end of Knighton, *Int. X. Scriptores.*—The ordinance between William Lord the Roos and Robert Tirwhitt, Juſtice of the King's Bench, 13 Hen. IV. n. 13.—A petition of the Commons with the king's anſwer, 2 Hen. V. n. 22.—A proviſo in Engliſh, inſerted into a French grant of a diſme and quinzeme, 9 Hen. V. n. 10.—At the beginning of the reign of Henry VI. the two languages ſeem to have been uſed indifferently. The ſubſidy of Wolle, &c. was granted in Engliſh 1 Hen. VI. n. 19. A pro-

we exceptions) appear to have been all in French, and the ſtatutes continued to be publiſhed in the ſame language for above one hundred and twenty years, till the 1 of Richard III.

§ 8. From what has been ſaid I think we may fairly conclude that the Engliſh language muſt have imbibed a ſtrong tincture of the French long before the age of Chaucer, and conſequently that he ought not to be charged as the importer of words and phraſes which he only uſed after the example of his predeceſſors, and in common with his contemporaries. This was the real fact, and is capable of being demonſtrated to any one who will take the trouble of comparing the writings of Chaucer with thoſe of Robert of Glouceſter and Robert of Brunne (24),

viſo in French was added by the Commons to the articles for the council of regency, which are in Engliſh, *ibid.* n. 33 Even the royal aſſent was given to bills in Engliſh 2 Hen. VI. n. 54. Be it ordeined as it is aſked. Be it as it is axed.—And again, n. 55.—I have ſtated this matter ſo particularly, in order to ſhew that when the French language ceaſed to be generally underſtood it was gradually diſuſed in parliamentary proceedings; and from thence, I think, we may fairly infer that while it was uſed in thoſe proceedings conſtantly and excluſively of the Engliſh, it muſt have been very generally underſtood.

(24) Robert of Glouceſter's Chronicle has been publiſhed by Hearne, Oxf. 1724, faithfully, I dare ſay, but from incorrect mſſ. The author ſpeaks of himſelf [page 560,] as living at the time of the battle of Eveſham in 1265; and from another paſſage [p. 224,] he ſeems to have lived beyond the year 1278, though his hiſtory ends in 1270. See *Hearne's Pref.* p. 48.——Robert Manning, of Brunne or Bourn in Lincolnſhire, tranſlated into Engliſh rhymes, from the French of Robert Groſteſte Biſhop of Lincoln, a treatiſe called *Manuel de Pechés*, as early as the year 1303. This work of his has never been printed, but is preſerved among the Harleian mſſ. n. 1701, and the Bodleian,

who both lived before him, and with thofe of Sir John Mandeville and Wickliffe, who lived at the fame time with him. If we could for a moment fuppofe the contrary, if we could fuppofe that the Englifh idiom in the age of Chaucer remained pure and unmixed, as it was fpoken in the courts of Alfred or Egbert, and that the French was ftill a foreign or at leaft a feparate language, I would afk whether it is credible that a poet writing in Englifh upon the moft familiar fubjects would ftuff his compofitions with French words and phrafes, which (upon the above fuppofition) muft have been unintelligible to the greateft part of his readers? or if he had been fo very abfurd, is it conceivable that he fhould have immediately become not only the moft admired but alfo the moft popular writer of his time and country?

PART THE SECOND.

Having thus endeavoured to fhew, in oppofition to the ill grounded cenfures of Verftegan and Skinner, that the corruption (or improvement) of the Englifh Language by a mixture of French was not originally

n. 2323. He alfo tranflated from the French an hiftory of England, the firft part, or *Gefta Britonum*, from Mr. Wace, the remainder, to the death of Ed. I. from Peter of Langtoft. His tranflation was finifhed in 1338: the latter part, with fome extracts from the former, was printed by Hearne in 1725 from a fingle mf.—Sir John Mandeville's Account of his Travels was written in 1356. In the laft edition, Lond. 1727, the text is faid to have been formed from a collation of feveral mff. and feems to be tolerably correct.—Wickliffe died in 1384: his tranflation of The New Teftament was printed for the firft time by Lewis, Lond. 1731. There is an immenfe catalogue of other works, either really his or afcribed to him, ftill extant in mf. See his Life by *Lewis*, and *Tanner*, *Bibl. Brit.*

owing to Chaucer, I ſhall proceed, in the ſecond part of this Eſſay, to make ſome obſervations upon the moſt material peculiarities of that Norman-Saxon dialect which I ſuppoſe to have prevailed in the age of Chaucer, and which in ſubſtance remains to this day the Language of England.

§ 1. By what means the French tongue was firſt introduced and propagated in this iſland has been ſufficiently explained above; but to aſcertain with any exactneſs the degrees by which it inſinuated itſelf and was ingrafted into the Saxon would be a much more difficult taſk (25), for want of a regular ſeries of the writings of approved authors tranſmitted to us by authentick copies. Luckily for us, as our concern is ſolely with that period when the incorporation of the two Languages was completed, it is of no great importance to determine the preciſe time at which any word or phraſe became naturalized; and for the ſame reaſon we have no need to inquire minutely with reſpect to the other alterations which the Saxon language in its ſeveral ſtages appears to have undergone, how far they proceeded

(25) In order to trace with exactneſs the progreſs of any language, it ſeems neceſſary, 1. that we ſhould have before us a continued ſeries of authors; 2. that thoſe authors ſhould have been approved as having written at leaſt with purity; and, 3. that their writings ſhould have been exactly copied. In the English Language we have ſcarce any authors within the firſt century after the conqueſt; of thoſe who wrote before Chaucer, and whoſe writings have been preſerved, we have no teſtimony of approbation from their contemporaries or ſucceſſors; and laſtly, the copies of their works which we have received are in general ſo full of inaccuracies as to make it often very difficult for us to be aſſured that we are in poſſeſſion of the genuine words of the author.

from the natural mutability of human ſpeech (eſpecially among an unlearned people) and how far they were owing to a ſucceſſive conflux of Daniſh and Norman invaders.

§ 2. The following obſervations, therefore, will chiefly refer to the ſtate in which the Engliſh Language appears to have been about the time of Chaucer, and they will naturally divide themſelves into two parts: the firſt will conſider the remains of the ancient Saxon maſs, however defaced or diſguiſed by various accidents; the ſecond will endeavour to point out the nature and effects of the acceſſions which in the courſe of near three centuries it had received from Normandy.

§ 3. For the ſake of method it will be convenient to go through the ſeveral parts of ſpeech in the order in which they are commonly ranged by grammarians.

1. The prepoſitive article ſe, ſeo, þæt, (which anſwered to the ὁ, ἡ, τὸ, of the Greeks, in all its varieties of gender, caſe, and number) had been long laid aſide, and inſtead of it an indeclinable *the* was prefixed to all ſorts of nouns in all caſes, and in both numbers.

2. The declenſions of the nouns ſubſtantive were reduced from ſix to one; and inſtead of a variety of caſes in both numbers they had only a genitive caſe ſingular, which was uniformly deduced from the nominative by adding to it *es*, or only *s*, if it ended an *e* feminine; and that ſame form was uſed to expreſs the (26) plural number in all its caſes, as

(26) It is ſcarce neceſſary to take notice of a few plurals which were expreſſed differently, though their number was greater in the time of Chaucer than it is now: ſome of them

nom. *shour*, gen. *shoures*, plur. *shoures*; nom. *name*, gen. *names*, plur. *names*.

The nouns adjective had lost all distinction of gender, case, or number.

3. The primitive pronouns retained one oblique case (27) in each number, as *ic* or *I*, *we*; obl. *me*, *us* ——*thou*, *ye*; obl. *thee*, *you*—*he*, *she*; *hi* (28), or *they*; obl. *him*, *hire*, *hem*, or *them*.

Their possessives were in the same state with the adjectives, *min*, *thin*, *his*, *hire*; *oure*, *youre*, *hir*, or *their* (29).

seem to retain their termination in *en* from the second declension of the Saxons, as *oxen*, *eyen*, *hosen*, &c.; others seem to have adopted it *euphonæ gratiâ*, as *brethren*, *eyren*, instead of bꞃoðꞃu æꝣꞃu; and a few seem to have been always irregularly declined, as *men*, *wimmen*, *mice*, *lice*, *feet*, &c. See *Hickes*, *Gr. A. S.* p. 11, 12.

(27) I take no notice here of the genitive cases *min*, *thin*, *oure*, *youre*, &c. as being at this time hardly ever distinguishable from pronouns possessive. How are we to know whether *min boke* should be rendered *liber mei* or *liber meus?* In the plural number however, in a few instances, the genitive case seems to have retained its proper power, C. T. v. 825, oure aller cok —would be more naturally translated—*nostrûm* omnium gallus, than *noster* omnium. And so in P. P. fol. cxi, youre aller hele, *vestrûm* omnium salus, not *vestra*.

(28) It is very difficult to say from whence or why the pronouns *they*, *them*, and *their*, were introduced into our language. The Saxon pronouns *hi*, *hem*, and *hir*, seem to have been in constant use in the time of Robert of Gloucester. Sir John Mandeville and Chaucer use *they* for *hi*, but never, as I remember, (in the mss. of authority) *them* or *their*.

(29) The four last of these possessive pronouns were sometimes expressed a little differently, *viz.* *hires*, *oures*, *youres*, and *hirs*, or *theirs*, as they are still when the noun to which they belong is understood, or when they are placed after it in a sentence. To the question, Whose book is this? we answer, *her's*, *ours*,

The interrogative and relative *who* had a genitive and accusative case, *whos* and *whom*, but no variety of number.

On the contrary the demonstrative, *this* and *that*, had a plural expression, *thise* and *tho*, but no variety of case.

The other words, which are often (though improperly) placed in the class of pronouns, were all become undeclined like the adjectives, except *eyther*, alteruter; *neyther*, neuter; *other*, alter; which had a genitive case singular, *eytheres*, *neytheres*, *otheres*; *other*, alius, had a genitive case singular, and a plural number, *otheres*; and *aller* (a corruption of ealꝛa) was still in use as the genitive plural of *alle* (30).

your's, or *theirs*; or we declare this book is *her's*, *ours*, &c. I can hardly conceive that the final *s* in these words is a mark of the possessive (or genitive) case, as a very able writer [*Short Introduction to English Grammar*, p. 35, 6,] seems to be inclined to think; because in the instances just mentioned, and in all which I have been able to find or to imagine, I cannot discover the least trace of the usual powers of the genitive case. The learned Wallis [*Gram. Ang.* c. 7,] has explained the use of these pronouns without attempting to account for their form; he only adds, "Nonnulli, *hern*, *ourn*, *yourn*, *hisn*, dicunt pro *her's*, "*ours*, &c. sed barbarè, nec quisquam (credo) sic scribere so-"let." If it could be proved that these words were anciently terminated in *n* we might be led to conjecture that they were originally abbreviations of *her own*, *our own*, &c. the *n* being afterwards softened into *s*, as it has been in many other words.

(30) It may be proper here to take a little notice of the pronoun or pronominal adjective *self*, which our best grammarians from Wallis downwards have attempted to metamorphose into a substantive. In the Saxon language it is certain that *sylf* was declined like other adjectives, and was joined in constructions with pronouns personal and substantives, just as *ipse* is in Latin. They said, *Ic sylf*, ego ipse; *min sylfes*, mei ip-

4. The verbs, at the time of which we are treating, were very nearly reduced to the ſimple ſtate in which they are at preſent.

ſius; *me ſylfne*, me ipſum, &c. *Petrus ſylf*, Petrus ipſe, &c. [See *Hickes*, *Gr. A. S.* p. 26.] In the age of Chaucer *ſelf*, like other adjectives, was become undeclined. Though he writes *ſelf*, *ſelve*, and *ſelven*, thoſe varieties do not denote any diſtinction of caſe or number, for he uſes indifferently *himſelf* and *himſelven*, *hemſelf* and *hemſelven*. He joins it with ſubſtantives in the ſenſe of *ipſe*, as the Saxons did. [See v. 2862. In that *ſelve* grove, in illo ipſo nemore—v. 4535. Thy *ſelve* neighebour, ipſe tuus vicinus.] But his great departure from the ancient uſage was with reſpect to the pronouns perſonal prefixed to *ſelf*: inſtead of declining them thro' the caſes which they ſtill retained, he uſes conſtantly *my ſelf* for I ſelf and me ſelf, *thy ſelf* for thou ſelf and thee ſelf, *him ſelf* and *hire ſelf*, for he ſelf and ſhe ſelf, and in the plural number *our ſelf* for we ſelf and us ſelf, *your ſelf* for ye ſelf and you ſelf, and *hem ſelf* for they ſelf.--- It would be vain to attempt to defend this practice of Chaucer upon any principles of reaſon or grammatical analogy; all that can be ſaid for it is, that perhaps any regular practice was preferable to the confuſion and uncertainty which ſeems to have prevailed before: accordingly the writers who ſucceeded him following his example, it became a rule, as I conceive, of the Engliſh Language that perſonal pronouns prefixed to *ſelf* were only uſed in one caſe in each number, *viz.* thoſe of the firſt and ſecond perſon in the genitive caſe (according to the Saxon form) and thoſe of the third in the accuſative.——By degrees a cuſtom was introduced of annexing *ſelf* to pronouns in the ſingular number only, and *ſelves* (a corruption, I ſuppoſe, of *ſelven*) to thoſe in the plural. This probably contributed to perſuade our late grammarians that *ſelf* was a ſubſtantive, as the true Engliſh adjective does not vary in the plural number. Another cauſe of their miſtake might be, that they conſidered *my*, *thy*, *our*, *your*, (to which *ſelf* is uſually joined) as pronouns poſſeſſive, whereas I think it more probable that they were the Saxon genitive caſes of the perſonal pronouns. The metaphyſical ſubſtantive *ſelf*, of which our more modern philoſo-

They had four modes, as now; the indicative, the imperative, the ſubjunctive, and the infinitive; and only two expreſſions of time, the preſent and the paſt. All the other varieties of mode and time were expreſſed by auxiliary verbs.

In the inflections of their verbs they differed very little from us in the ſingular number, *I love, thou loveſt, he loveth*; but in the plural they were not agreed among themſelves, ſome (31) adhering to the old Saxon form, *we loveth, ye loveth, they loveth*, and others adopting what ſeems to have been the Teutonick, *we loven, ye loven, they loven*. In the plural of the paſt tenſe the latter form prevailed univerſally, *I loved, thou lovedeſt, he loved; we loveden, ye loveden, they loveden*.

The ſecond perſon plural in the imperative mode regularly terminated in *eth*, as *loveth* ye (32), though the final conſonants (according to the genius of the language) were frequently omitted, eſpecially in verſe.

The Saxon termination of the infinitive in *an* had been long changed into *en*, to *loven*, to *liven*, &c. and they were beginning to drop the *n*, to *love*, to *live*.

The participle of the preſent time began to be generally terminated in *ing*, as *loving*, though the old form, which terminated in *ende* or *ande*, was ſtill in uſe, as *lovende* or *lovande*. The participle of the

phers and poets have made ſo much uſe, was unknown, I believe, in the time of Chaucer.

(31) In the long quotation from Trevifa (which ſee above, n. 21,) it may be obſerved that all his plural verbs of the preſent tenſe terminate in *eth*, whereas in Sir John Mandeville and Chaucer they terminate almoſt as conſtantly in *en*.

(32) *Mand.* p. 281. And at certeyn houres—thei ſeyn to certeyn officeres---*Maketh pees* (*i. e.* make ye ſilence.) And than ſeyn the officeres, *Now pees! lyſteneth* (*i. e.* liſten ye)---In the following page *ſtondeth* is uſed for *ſtand ye*, and *putteth* for *put ye*.

paſt time continued to be formed, as the paſt time itſelf was, in *ed*, as *loved*, or in ſome contraction of *ed* (33), except among the irregular verbs (34),

(33) The methods by which the final *ed* of the paſt tenſe, and its participle, was contracted or abbreviated in the age of Chaucer were chiefly the following:

1. By throwing away the *d*.——This method took place in verbs whoſe laſt conſonant was *t*, preceded by a conſonant; thus *caſte*, *coſte*, *hurte*, *putte*, *ſlitte*, were uſed inſtead of *caſted*, *coſted*, *hurted*, *putted*, *ſlitted*.—— 2. By tranſpoſing the *d*.—— This was very generally done in verbs whoſe laſt conſonant was *d*, preceded by a vowel; thus inſtead of *reded*, *leded*, *ſpreded*, *bleded*, *feded*, it was uſual to write *redde*, *ledde*, *ſpredde*, *bledde*, *fedde*.---And this ſame method of tranſpoſition, I apprehend, was originally applied to ſhorten thoſe words which we now contract by ſyncope, as *lov'd*, *liv'd*, *ſmil'd*, *hear'd*, *fear'd*, which were anciently written *lovde*, *livde*, *ſmilde*, *herde*, *ferde*.---3. By tranſpoſing the *d* and changing it into *t*. —This method was uſed, 1. In verbs whoſe laſt conſonant was *t*, preceded by a vowel; thus *leted*, *ſweted*, *meted*, were changed into *lette*, *ſwette*, *mette*.—2. In verbs whoſe laſt conſonant was *d*, preceded by a conſonant; thus *bended*, *bilded*, *girded*, were changed into *bente*, *bilte*, *girte*.---And generally in verbs in which *d* is changed into *t* I conceive that *d* was firſt tranſpoſed, ſo that *dwelled*, *paſſed*, *dremed*, *feled*, *keped*, ſhould be ſuppoſed to have been firſt changed into *dwellde*, *paſſde*, *dremde*, *felde*, *kepde*, and then into *dwelte*, *paſte*, *dremte*, *felte*, *kepte*.------4. The laſt method, together with a change of the radical vowel, will account for the analogy of a ſpecies of verbs, generally reputed anomalous, which form their paſt time and its participle (according to modern orthography) in *ght*. The proceſs ſeems to have been thus, *Bring*, *bringed*, *brongde*, *brodge*, *brogte*; *Think*, *thinked*, *thonkde*, *thokde*, *thokte*; *Teche*, *teched*, *tachde*, *tachte*, &c.; only *fought*, from *fighted*, ſeems to have been formed by throwing away the *d*, (according to method 1.) and changing the radical vowel. See inſtances of ſimilar contractions in the Francic language, *Hickes*, *Gram. Fr. Th.* p. 66.

(34) I conſider thoſe verbs only as irregular in which the

where for the moſt part it terminated in *en*; as *bounden*, *founden*.

The greateſt part of the auxiliary verbs were only in uſe in the preſent and paſt tenſes of their indicative and ſubjunctive modes: they were inflected in thoſe tenſes like other verbs, and were prefixed to the infinitive mode of the verb to which they were auxiliary; I *ſhall* loven, I *will* or *woll* loven, I *may* or *mow* loven, I *can* or *con* loven, &c.; we *ſhullen* loven, we *willen* or *wollen* loven, we *mowen* loven, we *connen* loven, &c. In the paſt tenſe I (35) *ſhulde* loven, I *wolde* loven, I *mighte* or *moughte* loven, I *coude* loven, &c.; we *ſhulden*, we *wolden*, we *mighten* or *moughten*, we *coulden*, loven, &c.

The auxiliary to *haven* was a complete verb, and being prefixed to the participle of the paſt time was

paſt time and its participle differ from each other. Their varieties are too numerous to be particularly examined here, but I believe there are ſcarce any in which the deviations from the regular form will not appear to have been made by ſome method of contraction or abbreviation ſimilar to thoſe which have been pointed out in the laſt note among the regular verbs. The common termination of the participle in *en* is clearly a ſubſtitution for *ed*, probably for the ſake of a more agreeable ſound, and it is often ſhortened, as *ed* has been ſhewn to be, by tranſpoſition; thus *drawen*, *knowen*, *boren*, *ſtolen*, were changed into *drawne*, *knowne*, *borne*, *ſtolne*.

(35) *Shulde* and *wolde* are contracted from *ſhulled* and *wolled*, by tranſpoſing the *d* according to method 2.—— *Mighte* and *moughte* are formed from *maghed* and *moghed*, according to method 3. *maghed*, *maghde*, *maghte*; *Moghed*, *moghde*, *moghte*. ---*Coude* is from *conned*, by tranſpoſition of the *d*, and ſoftening the *n* into *u*; it is often written *couthe*, and always ſo, I believe, when it is uſed as a participle. In the ſame manner Biſhop Douglas and other Scottiſh writers uſe *begouth* as the preterit of *begin*; *begonned*, *begonde*, *begoude*, *begouthe*.

used to expreſs the preterperfect and preterpluperfect tenses; I *have* loved, thou *haveſt* or *haſt* loved, he *haveth* or *hath* loved; we *haven* or *han* loved, &c.; I *hadde* (36) loved, thou *haddeſt* loved, he *hadde* loved; we, ye, they, *hadden* loved.

The auxiliary to *ben* was alſo a complete verb, and being prefixed to the participle of the paſt time, with the help of the other auxiliary verbs, ſupplied the place of the whole paſſive voice, for which the Saxon language had no other form of expreſſion; I *am*, thou *art*, he *is*, loved; we, ye, they, *aren* or *ben* loved; I *was*, thou *waſt*, he *was*, loved; we, ye, they, *weren* loved (37).

5. With reſpect to the indeclinable parts of ſpeech, it will be ſufficient to obſerve here that many of them ſtill remained pure Saxon: the greateſt number had undergone a ſlight change of a letter or two, and the more conſiderable alterations by which ſome had been disfigured were fairly deducible from that propenſity to abbrevation for which the inhabitants of

(36) *Hadde* is contracted from *haved*, as *made* is from *maked*. See *Hickes' Gram. Fr. Th.* p. 66.

(37) The verb *to do* is conſidered by Wallis and other later grammarians as an auxiliary verb. It is ſo uſed, though very rarely, by Chaucer. [See ver. 14742,4.] He more commonly uſes it tranſitively; [ver. 10074. *Do* ſtripen me, *Faites me depouiller*—ver. 10075. *Do* me drenche, *Faites me noyer*;] but ſtill more frequently to ſave the repetition of a verb, [v. 26.;

> His eyen twinkled in his head aright,
> As *don* the ſterres in a froſty night.]

Dr. Hickes has taken notice that *do* was uſed in this laſt manner by the Saxons, [*Gr. A. S.* p. 77,] and ſo was *faire* by the French, and indeed is ſtill. It muſt be confeſſed that the exact power which *do*, as an auxiliary, now has in our language is not eaſy to be defined, and ſtill leſs to be accounted for from analogy.

this iſland have been long remarkable, though perhaps not more juſtly ſo than their neighbours.

§ 4. Such was in general the ſtate of the Saxon part of the Engliſh Language when Chaucer began to write. Let us take a ſhort view of the acceſſions which it may be ſuppoſed to have received at different times from Normandy.

As the language of our anceſtors was complete in all its parts, and had ſerved them for the purpoſes of diſcourſe, and even of compoſition in various kinds, long before they had any intimate acquaintance with their French neighbours, they had no call from neceſſity (and conſequently no ſufficient inducement) to alter its original and radical conſtitutions, or even its cuſtomary forms; accordingly we have juſt ſeen that in all the eſſential parts of ſpeech the characteriſtical features of the Saxon idiom were always preſerved, and we ſhall ſee preſently that the crowds of French words which from time to time were imported were themſelves made ſubject, either immediately or by degrees to the laws of that idiom.

§ 5. The words which were thus imported were chiefly nouns ſubſtantive, adjectives, verbs, and participles. The adverbs which are derived from French adjectives ſeem to have been formed from them after they were angliciſed, as they have all the Saxon termination *lich* or *ly* (38), inſtead of the French *ment*. As to the other indeclinable parts of ſpeech, our language, being ſufficiently rich in its own ſtores, has borrowed nothing from France except perhaps an interjection or two.

(38) As *rarely*, *continually*, *veraily*, *bravely*, &c. which correſpond to the French adverbs *rarement*, *continuellement*, *veraiment*, *bravement*, &c.

The nouns ſubſtantive in the French language (as in all the other languages derived from the Latin) had loſt their caſes long before the time of which we are treating, but ſuch of them as were naturalized here ſeem all to have acquired a genitive caſe, according to the corrupted Saxon form which has been ſtated above. Their plural number was alſo new modelled to the ſame form if neceſſary, for in nouns ending in *e* feminine, as the greater part of the French did, the two languages were already agreed; nom. *flour*, gen. *floures*, plur. *floures;* nom. *dame*, gen. *dames*, plur. *dames*.

On the contrary the adjectives which at home had a diſtinction of gender and number, upon their naturalization here ſeem to have been generally ſtript of both, and reduced to the ſimple ſtate of the Engliſh adjective, without caſe, gender, or number.

The French verbs were obliged to lay aſide all their differences of conjugation; *accorder*, *ſouffrir*, *recevoir*, *deſcendre*, were regularly changed into——*accorden*, *ſuffren*, *receiven*, *deſcenden*. They brought with them only two tenſes, the preſent and the paſt; nor did they retain any ſingularity of inflection which could diſtinguiſh them from other verbs of Saxon growth.

The participle indeed of the preſent time, in ſome verbs, appears to have ſtill preſerved its original French form, as *uſant*, *ſuffiſant*, &c.

The participle of the paſt time adopted almoſt univerſally the regular Saxon termination in *ed*, as *accorded*, *ſuffred*, *received*, *deſcended:* it even frequently aſſumed the prepoſitive particle ȝe, (or *y*, as it was latterly written) which among the Saxons was very generally, though not peculiarly, prefixed to that participle.

§ 6. Upon the whole, I believe it may be ſaid with truth that at the time which we are conſidering

though the form of our language was ſtill Saxon the matter was in a great meaſure French. The novelties of all kinds which the revolution in 1066 had introduced demanded a large ſupply of new terms, and our anceſtors very naturally took what they wanted from the language which was already familiar to a conſiderable part of the community. Our poets in particular (who have generally the principal ſhare in modelling a language) found it their intereſt to borrow as many words as they conveniently could from France. As they were for a long time chiefly tranſlators, this expedient ſaved them the trouble of hunting for correſpondent terms in Saxon. The French words too, being the remains of a poliſhed language, were ſmoother, and ſlid eaſier into metre, than the Saxon, which had never undergone any regular cultivation: their final ſyllables chimed together with more frequent conſonancies, and their accents were better adapted to rhyming poetry. But more of this in the next part.

PART THE THIRD.

Before we proceed in the third and laſt part of this Eſſay, in which we are to conſider the Verſification of Chaucer, it may be uſeful to premiſe a few obſervations upon the ſtate of Engliſh poetry antecedent to his time.

§ 1. That the Saxons had a ſpecies of writing which differed from their common proſe, and was conſidered by themſelves as poetry (39), is very cer-

(39) The account which Beda has given of Cædmon [*Eccl. Hiſt.* l. iv. c. 24,] is ſufficient to prove this: he repeatedly calls the compoſitions of Cædmon *carmina*—*poemata*—and in one place *verſus*; which words in the Saxon tranſlation are ren-

tain, but it seems equally certain that their compositions of that kind were neither divided into verses of a determinate number of syllables, nor embellished with what we call rhyme (40). There are no traces,

dered leoþ--leoþ ꞅonᵹeꞃ, or ꞅonᵹeꞃ--and ꝼeꞃꞅ; and *ars canendi* is translated leoꝺ cꞃæꝼꞇ or ꞅanᵹ cꞃæꝼꞇ.—Asser also, in his life of Alfred, speaks of *Saxonica poemata*, and *Saxonica carmina*, [p. 16, 43,] and most probably the *Cantilenæ per successiones temporum detritæ*, which Malmesb. cites in his Hist. l. ii. p. 52, were in the Saxon language. The same writer [l. v. *de Pontif. ed. Gale*,] mentions a *carmen triviale* of Aldhelm (the author of the Latin poem *de Virginitate*, who died in 709) as *adhuc vulgo cantitatum*; and he quotes the testimony of King Alfred, in his *Liber Manualis*, or Hand-boc, as saying "that no one was ever equal to Aldhelm in English "poetry."

(40) Both these circumstances are evident from the most cursory view of the several specimens of Saxon poetry which Hickes has exhibited in his *Gram. Ang. Sax.* c. xxi, and they are allowed by that learned writer himself. Unwilling however, as it should seem, to leave his favourite language without some system of Versification, he supposes that the Saxons observed the quantity of syllables in their verses, "tho' perhaps," he adds, "not so strictly as the heroick Greek and "Latin poets."—He gives three reasons for this supposition; 1. Because they did not use rhyme. 2. Because they transposed their words in such an unnatural manner; "Hoc autem cur "facerent Anglo-Saxonum poetæ, nulla, ut videtur, alia as-"signari causa potest, quam quæ, ut idem facerent, Græcos "et Latinos poetas coegit; nempe metri lex." 3. Because they had a great number of dissyllable and polysyllable words which were fit for metrical feet.—However specious these reasons may appear they are certainly far from conclusive, even if we had no monuments of Saxon poetry remaining; but in the present case, I apprehend, the only satisfactory proof would have been to have produced, out of the great heap of poetical compositions in the Saxon language, some regular metrical

I believe, to be found of either rhyme or metre in our language till some years after the conquest; so that

verses, that is, some portions of words similar to each other in the nature and order of their component syllables, and occurring either in a continued series or at stated intervals. If all external proofs of the nature of the Roman poetry were lost, a few verses of Virgil or Horace would be sufficient to convince us that their metres were regulated by the quantity of syllables; and if Cædmon had really written in a metre regulated by the quantity of syllables, a few of his lines must have afforded us the same conviction with respect to the general laws of his Versification. For my own part, I confess myself unable to discover any material distinction of the Saxon poetry from prose, except a greater pomp of diction and a more stately kind of march. Our ancestors affected a certain pomp of style in all their compositions; "Angli" (says *Malmesbury*, l. i. p. 13,) "*pompatice* dictare amant." And this affectation I suspect was the true cause of their so frequently inverting the natural order of their words, especially in poetry. The obscurity arising from these inversions had the appearance of pomp: that they were not owing to the constraint of any metrical laws (as Hickes supposes) may be presumed from their being commonly used in prose, and even in Latin prose, by Saxon writers. Ethelwerd, an historian descended in the fifth degree from King Ethelred, [*Inter Script. post Bedam*, p. 831——850,] is full of them. The following passage of his history, if literally translated, would read very like Saxon poetry: "Abstrahuntur "tunc | ferventes fide | anno in eodem | Hibernia stirpe | "tres viri lecti ; | furtim consuunt lembum | taurinus byr-"sis ; | alimentum sibi | hebdomadarium supplent ; | ele-"vant dies | per vela septem | totidemque noctes," &c.---- We do not see any marks of studied alliteration in the old Saxon poetry, so that we might attribute the introduction of that practice to the Danes, if we were certain that it made a part of the Scaldick Versification at the time of the Danish settlements in England.——However that may have been Giraldus Cambrensis [*Descr. Camb.* p. 889,] speaks of *annomina-*

I should apprehend we must have been obliged for both to the Normans, who very early (41) distin-

tion, which he describes to be what we call *alliteration*, as the favourite rhetorical figure of both the Welsh and English in his time: "Adeo igitur hoc verborum ornatu duæ nationes, "Angli scil. et Cambri, in omni sermone exquisito utuntur, "ut nihil ab his eleganter dictum, nullum nisi rude et agreste "censeatur eloquium, si non schematis hujus limâ plene fue- "rit expolitum." It is plain that alliteration must have had very powerful charms for the ears of our ancestors, as we find that the Saxon poetry, by the help of this embellishment alone, even after it had laid aside its pompous phraseology, was able to maintain itself without rhyme or metre for several centuries. See *Dr. Percy's Essay on the Metre of Pierce Ploughman's Visions. Rel. of Ancient Poetry*, vol. ii.

(41) I cannot find that the French antiquaries have been able to produce any poetry, in any of the dialects of their language, of an earlier date than the conquest of England, or indeed than the beginning of the 12th century. However we read of a Thibaud de Vernun, canon of Rouen, who before the year 1053, "multorum gesta Sanctorum, sed et Sti Wandregesili, a "suâ latinitate transtulit, atque in communis linguæ usum "satis facunde refudit, ac sic, *ad quamdam tinnuli rythmi simi- "litudinem, urbanas ex illis cantilenas edidit.*" [*De Mirac. Sti Vulframni. Auctore Monacho Fontanell. Temp. Will.* I. *ap. Dacherii Acta SS. Ord. Ben.* t. iii. p. 379.] It is probable too that the *Vulgares Cantus*, which according to Raimond de Agiles [*Gesta Dei*, p. 180,] were composed against Arnoulph, a chaplain of the Duke of Normandy, in the first croisade, were in the French language; and there can be little doubt that William IX. Duke of Aquitain, upon his return from Jerusalem in 1101, made use of his native tongue when "miserias captivitatis suæ, "erat jocundus et lepidus, multotiens retulit rythmicis ver- "sibus cum facetis modulantionibus." *Ord. Vital.* l. x. p. 793. ---The history of the taking of Jerusalem, which is said to have been written by the Chevalier Gregoire Bechada of Tours in Limoges, "maternâ linguâ rythmo vulgari, ut populus "pleniter intelligeret," [*Labbe, Bibl. Nov.* t. ii. p. 296.] has

guished themselves by poetical performances in their vulgar tongue.

The metres which they used, and which we seem to have borrowed from them, were plainly copied from the Latin (42) rythmical verses, which in the

not yet been brought to light; so that probably the oldest French poem of any length now extant is a translation of the *Bestiarius* by Philippe de Thaun, it being addressed to Aliz (Adeliza of Louvain) the second queen of our Henry I.--There is a copy of this poem among the *Cotton* mss. Nero. A. v. The authors of the *Histoire Literaire de la France*, t. ix. p. 173--90, suppose it to have been written about 1125, that is, thirty years before *Le Brut*, which Fauchet had placed at the head of his list of French poems.——I shall take occasion in another place to shew that the real author of *Le Brut* was Wace, (the same who wrote the *Roman de Rou*) and not Wistace, as Fauchet calls him.

(42) The Latin rythmical verses resembled the metrical in the number of syllables only, without any regard to quantity. "Arma cano virumque qui primus Trojæ ab oris," would pass for a very good rythmical hexameter. The greatest part however of these compositions were in imitation of the iambick and trochaick metres; and in them, if the accents fell luckily, the unlearned ear would often be as well pleased as if the laws of quantity were observed. The two rythmical hymns quoted by Beda [*De Metris*, *edition Putsch.* p. 2380,] are sufficient to prove this. The first, he observes, "ad instar iambici metri "pulcherrime factus est."

O rex æterne Domine
Rerum creator omnium, &c.

The other is "ad formam metri Trochaici."

Apparebit repentina dies magna Domini
Fur obscura velut nocte improvisos occupans.

In the former of these hymns *Domine*, to a modern ear at least, sounds as well as *nomine*; and in the latter *dies* and *velut*, being accented upon their first syllables, affect us no otherwise than *dies* and *velum* would have done.—From such Latin

declenſion of that language were current in various forms among thoſe who either did not underſtand or did not regard the true quantity of ſyllables; and the practice of rhyming (43) is probably to be deduced

rythms, and chiefly thoſe of the iambick form, the preſent poetical meaſures of all the nations of Roman Europe are clearly derived. Inſtead of long and ſhort ſyllables, the feet of our poetry are compoſed of ſyllables accented and unaccented, or rather of ſyllables ſtrongly and leſs ſtrongly accented, and hence it is that we have ſo little variety of feet, and conſequently of metres; becauſe the poſſible combinations of ſyllables accented and unaccented are from the nature of ſpeech much more limited in point of number than the combinations of long and ſhort ſyllables were in the Greek and Latin languages.

(43) We ſee evident marks of a fondneſs for rhyme in the hymns of S. Ambroſius and S. Damaſus, as early as the 4th century. One of the hymns of Damaſus, which begins

> Martyris ecce dies Agathæ
> Virginis emicat eximæ, &c.

is regularly rhymed throughout. Prudentius, who had a more claſſical taſte, ſeems ſtudiouſly to have avoided rhymes; but Sedulius and Fortunatus, in the 5th and 6th centuries, uſe them frequently in their hymns. [See their works, and an hymn of the latter, *ap. Fabric. Bib. Med. Ætat.* v. *Fortunatus.*]——The learned Muratori, in his Diſſertation *de Rythmicâ Veterum Poeſi*, [*Antiq. Med. Ævi. Diſſert.* xl,] has collected together a vaſt heap of examples, which prove that rhymes were very generally uſed in hymns, ſequences, and other religious compoſitions in Latin, in the 7th, 8th, and 9th, centuries; ſo that for my own part I think it as probable that the poets in the vulgar languages (who firſt appeared about the 9th century) borrowed their rhymes from the Latin poetry of that age, as it is evident that they did the forms of their Verſification.----Otfrid of Weiſſenberg, the earlieſt rhymer that is known in any of the modern languages, about the year 870, calls rhyme, in the ſtyle of the Latin grammarians, *Schema omæoteleuton.*

from the ſame original, as we find that practice to have prevailed in eccleſiaſtical hymns, and other compoſitions in Latin, ſome centuries before Otfrid of Weiſſenberg, the firſt known rhymer in any of the vulgar European dialects.

§ 2. I wiſh it were in my power to give a regular hiſtory of the progreſs which our anceſtors made in this new ſtyle of Verſification; but (44) except a few

[*Pref. ad Liutbert, ap. Schilter. Theſ. Antiq. Teuton.* t.i. p. 11.] And when the monk who has been cited in note 41 ſays that Thibaud de Vernun compoſed his ſongs *ad quomdam tinnuli rythmi ſimilitudinem*, he muſt mean I think that he compoſed them in imitation of [Latin] jingling rythm. I ſay *Latin* (or at leaſt ſome *foreign*) rythm, becauſe otherwiſe he would rather have ſaid *in rythmo tinnulo*. The addition of the epithet *tinnulus* ſeems to ſhew plainly enough that *rythmus* alone did not then ſignify what we call *rhyme*.

(44) William of Malmeſbury [*de Geſt. Pont. Angl.* l. iii. p. 271.] has preſerved two rhyming verſes of Aldred Archbiſhop of York, which that prelate threw out againſt one Urſe, Sheriff of Worceſterſhire, not long after the conqueſt; "Hateſt thou "Urſe———Have thou God's curſe." *Vocaris Urſus*——— *Habeas Dei maledictionem*. Malmeſbury ſays that he inſerts this Engliſh, *quod Latina verba non ſicut Anglica concinnitati reſpondent*. The concinnity, I ſuppoſe, muſt have conſiſted in the rhyme, and would hardly have been thought worth repeating if rhyme in Engliſh had not then been a novelty.------ The lines in the Saxon Chronicle, to which I mean to refer, are in p. 191. *ed. Gibſ.* The paſſage begins,

Caꞅꞇelaꞅ he leꞇ ƿyꞃcean.
⁊eaꞃme men ꞅƿiðe ꞅƿencean———

All the lines are not in rhyme, but I ſhall ſet down a few in Engliſh characters which I think could not have chimed together ſo exactly by mere accident.

Thet he nam be rihte
And mid mycelan un-rihte

lines in the Saxon Chronicle upon the death of William the Conqueror, which seem to have been intended for verses of the modern fashion, and a short Canticle which, according to Matthew Paris (45), the blessed Virgin was pleased to dictate to Godric, an hermit near Durham, I have not been able to discover any attempts at rhyming poetry which can with

Of his leode
For littelre neode——
He sætte mycel deor-frith,
And he lægde laga ther with——
He forbead tha heortas,
Swylce eac tha baras;
Swa swithe he lufode tha hea-deor
Swylce he wære heora fæder.
Eac he sætte be tham haran,
That hi mosten freo faran——

The concluding lines are,

Se æl-mihtiga God
Kithe his saule mild-heortnisse
And do him his synna forgifenesse.

The writer of this part of the Chronicle (as he tells us himself, p. 189,) had seen the Conqueror.

(45) *Hist. Angl.* p. 100. Godric died in 1170, so that according to tradition the Canticle was prior to that period: the first stanza being incorrectly printed I shall only transcribe the last-----

Seinte Marie, Christes bur,
Meidenes clen had, moderes flur,
Dilie mine sennen, rixe in min mod,
Bringe me to *winne* with selfe God——

Hoc canticum (says M. P.) *potest hoc modo in Latinum transferri.*

Sancta Maria, Christi thalamus,
virginalis puritas, matris flos,
dele mea crimina, regna in mente mea,
duc me ad felicitatem cum solo Deo.

Upon the authority of this translation I have altered *pinne* (as it is in the print) to *winne*. The Saxon ƿ is often mistaken for a p.

probability be referred to an earlier period than the reign of Henry II. In that reign Layamon (46), a prieſt of Ernleye near Severn, as he calls himſelf, tranſlated (chiefly from) the French of Wace (47)

(46) This work of Layamon is extant among the *Cotton, mſſ. Cal.* A. ix. A much later copy, in which the author by a natural corruption was called *Laweman*, was deſtroyed by the fire. There is an account of both copies in Wanley's *Cat. mſſ. Septent.* p. 228. and p 237.-----The following ſhort extract from fol. 7,8, containing an account of the Sirens which Brutus met with in his voyage, will ſerve to ſupport what is ſaid in the text of this author's intermixing rhymes with his proſe:

Ther heo funden the Merminnen,
That beoth deor of muchele ginnen.
Wifmen hit thunchet ful iwis,
Bineothe thon gurdle hif thunceth fiſc
Theos habbeth ſwa murie ſong,
Ne beo tha dai na ſwa long,
Ne bith na man weri
Heora ſonges to heran———

(47) The French clerk whom Layamon profeſſes to have followed in his hiſtory is called by Wanley [*Cat. mſſ. Sept.* p. 228,] *Wate*, as if poor *Maiſtre Wace* were doomed to have his name perpetually miſtaken. Fauchet, and a long ſtring of French antiquaries, have agreed to call him *Wiſtace*. I ſhall here, in juſtice to *Maiſtre Wace*, (for whom I have a great reſpect not only as a very ancient but as a very ingenious rhymer) ſtate my reaſons ſhortly for believing that he was the real author of that tranſlation in French verſe of Geffrey of Monmouth's romance which is commonly called *Le Brut*.---- In the firſt place, his name is diſtinctly written in the text of three mſſ. of very conſiderable antiquity: two of them are in the Muſeum, *viz. Cotton, Vitell.* A. x. and *Reg.* 13 A. xxi.: the third is at Cambridge, in the library of Bennet College, n. 58. In a fourth mſ. alſo in the Muſeum, *Harl.* 6508, it is written *Gazce* and *Gace*, by a ſubſtitution of G for W, very uſual in the French language.-----Secondly, in the mſ. above-mentioned of Layamon's hiſtory, *Cal.* A. ix, if I may truſt my own

a fabulous hiſtory of the Britons entitled Le Brut, which Wace himſelf, about the year 1155, had tranſ-

eyes the name is *Wace*, and not *Wate*, as Wanley read it. The Saxon ꞇ is not very unlike a c. What Layamon has ſaid further, "that this Wace was a French clerk, and preſented his "book to Alienor the queen of Henry," [the Second] agrees perfectly well with the date of *Le Brut*, (in 1155, according to all the copies) and with the account which Wace himſelf, in his *Roman de Rou*, has given of his attachment to Henry.----- Thirdly, in a ſubſequent tranſlation of *Le Brut*, which was made by Robert of Brunne in the beginning of the 14th century, he repeatedly names *Mayſter Wace* as the author (or rather tranſlator from the Latin) of the French hiſtory. See *Hearne's App. to Pref. to Peter Langtoft*, p. 98.---In oppoſition to this ſtrong evidence in favour of Wace we have nothing material except the mſ. of *Le Brut* quoted by Fauchet, [*de la Langue Françoiſe*, l. ii,] in which according to his citation the author is called *Wiſtace*. The later French writers who have called him ſo, I apprehend, have only followed Fauchet. The reader will judge whether it is not more probable that the writer of the mſ. or even Fauchet himſelf, may have made a little ſlip in this matter, than that ſo many mſſ. as I have quoted above, and the ſucceſſive teſtimonies of Layamon and Robert of Brunne, ſhould have concurred in calling the author of *Le Brut Wace*, if that had not been his true name.———I will juſt add that *La vie de Seint Nicholas*, which is frequently quoted by Hickes, [*Gr. A. S.* p. 146, 149, *et al.*] was probably a work of this ſame Wace, as appears from the following paſſage, [*mſ. Bodl.* 1687, v. 17 from the end.]

> Ci faut le livre *meſtre Guace*,
> Quil ad de Seint Nicholas fait,
> De Latin en Romaunz eſtreit
> A Olberd le fiz Thiout,
> Qui Seint Nicholas mout amout.———

And I ſhould ſuſpect that *Le Martyre de St. George en vers François par Robert Guaco*, mentioned by M. Lebeuf as extant in the Bibl. Colbert. Cod, 3745, [*Mem. de l'Acad. D. J. et*

lated from the Latin of Geffrey of Monmouth. Tho' the greateſt part of this work of Layamon reſemble the old Saxon poetry, without rhyme or metre, yet he often intermixes a number of ſhort verſes of unequal lengths, but rhyming together pretty exactly, and in ſome places he has imitated not unſucceſsfully the regular octoſyllable meaſure of his French original.

§ 3. It may ſeem extraordinary, after theſe proofs that the art of rhyming was not unknown or unpractiſed in this country in the time of Henry II. that we ſhould be obliged to ſearch through a ſpace of above an hundred years without being able to meet with a ſingle maker of Engliſh rhymes whom we know to have written in that interval. The caſe I ſuſpect to have been this. The ſcholars of that age (and there were many who might fairly be called ſo in the Engliſh dominions abroad (48) as well as at home) affected to write only (49) in Latin, ſo that we do not

B. L. t. xvii. p. 731,] ought to be aſcribed to the ſame author, as *Guaco* is a very ſtrange name. The Chriſtian name of Wace was Robert. See *Huet, Orig. de Caen*, p. 412.

(48) The following paſſage of Roger de Hoveden [p. 672.] gives a ſtriking deſcription of the extent of the Engliſh dominions in the time of Richard I.; "Sciendum eſt quod tota terra, quæ eſt ab Anglia uſque in Hiſpaniam, ſecus mare, videlicet Normannia, Britannia, Pictavia, eſt de dominio Regis Angliæ." The kings of France at that time were not poſſeſſed of an inch of territory upon the coaſts of the ocean.

(49) It will be ſufficient to name John of Saliſbury, Peter of Blois, Joſeph of Exeter, Gerald Barry, Nigell Wireker, Geffrey Vinſauf: I ſhould add to this liſt Walter Map, if there were not a tradition, not entirely deſtitute of probability, that he was the author of the *Roman de Saint Graal* in French. I find this in an old mſ. of Triſtan, *Bib. Reg.* 20. D. ii. p. antep. "Quant "Boort ot conte laventure del Saint Craal, teles come ele

find that they ever composed in verse or prose in any other language. On the other hand they who meant to recommend themselves by their poetry to the favour of the great took care to write in French, the only language which their patrons understood; and hence it is that we see so many French poems (50)

"estoient avenues, eles furent mises en escrit, gardees en la-"mere de Salibieres, dont Mestre Galtier Map l'ftrett a faire "son livre du Saint Graal, por lamor du roy Herri son sengnor, "qui fist lestorie tralater del Latin en Romanz." The adventure of the Saint Graal is plainly written upon a very different plan from the other romances of the Round Table, and is likely enough to have come from an ecclesiastick, though rather, I confess, from a graver one than Walter Map may be supposed to have been. The French romance from which our romance called *Mort d'Arthur* is translated seems to be an injudicious jumble of *Le Brut*, *Lancelot*, *Tristan*, the *Saint Graal*, and some other romances of less note, which were all, I apprehend, originally separate works.

(50) *Le Bestiaire*, by Philippe de Thaun, addressed to Queen Adeliza, *Le Brut*, and *Le Roman de Rou* by Wace, have been mentioned above. Besides the *Roman de Rou* there is another Chronicle of Normandy in French verse by Maitre Beneit, compiled by order of Henry II. ms. *Harl.* 1717. The same Beneit was perhaps the author of the *Vie de St Thomas*, ms. *Harl.* 3775, though he there calls himself

Frere Beneit, le pecheour,
oves les seirs dia.——

At the end of a copy of *Le Brut*, *Bibl. Reg.* 13. A xxi, there is a continuation of the history to the death of William II. in the same metre, by a Geffrei Gaimar, which escaped the observation of Mr. Casley; and at the end of another copy, *Vitel.* A. x, the history is continued by an anonymous author to the accession of King John.—Richard I. composed himself in French: a specimen of his poetry has been published by Mr. Walpole, *Cat. of Royal Authors*, v. i.; and his Chancellor, William Bishop of Ely, (who, as has been observed before, was totally ig-

about that time either addreſſed directly to the principal perſons at the Engliſh court, or at leaſt written on ſuch ſubjects as we may ſuppoſe to have been moſt likely to engage their attention. Whatever therefore of Engliſh poetry was produced in this infancy of the art being probably the work of illiterate authors, and circulating only among the vulgar (51), we need not be much ſurpriſed that no more of it has been tranſmitted down to poſterity.

§ 4. The learned Hickes however has pointed out to us two very curious pieces which may with probability be referred to this period. The firſt of them is a paraphraſe of the goſpel hiſtories, entitled *Ormulum* (52), by one Orm or Ormin. It ſeems to have

norant of the Engliſh language) was by no means behindhand with his maſter in his encouragement of French poets; for of this biſhop the paſſage in Hoveden is to be underſtood which Mr. Walpole has applied to the king himſelf; it is part of a letter of Hugh Biſhop of Coventry, who, ſpeaking of the Biſhop of Ely, ſays that he, "ad augmentum et famam ſui nominis, "emendicata carmina et rythmos adulatorios comparabat, "et de regno Francorum cantores et joculatores muneribus "allexerat, ut de illo canerent in plateis; et jam dicebatur "ubique, quod non erat talis in orbe." *Hoveden*, p. 103.

(51) To theſe cauſes we may probably impute the loſs of thoſe ſongs upon Hereward (the laſt perhaps of the Saxon heroes) which according to Ingulphus were ſung about the ſtreets in his time. *Hiſt. Croyl.* p. 68. Robert of Brunne alſo mentions a rhyme concerning Gryme the fiſher, the founder of Grymeſby, Hanelok the Dane, and his wife Goldeburgh, daughter to a King Athelwold, who all now, together with their bard,

——illacrymabiles
Urgentur ignotique longa
Nocte.——

See *Tranſlation of Peter of Langtoft*, p. 25, and *Camden's Brit.* p. 569.

(52) The Ormulum ſeems to be placed by Hickes among the

been confidered as mere profe by Hickes and by Wanley, who have both given large extracts from it; but I apprehend every reader who has an ear for metre will eafy perceive that it is written very exactly in verfes of fifteen fyllables, without rhyme, in imitation of the moft common fpecies of the Latin

firft writings after the conqueft, [*Gram. Ang. Sax.* c. xxii. p. 165.] but I confefs I cannot conceive it to have been earlier than the reign of Henry II. There is a peculiarity in the author's orthography which confifts in doubling the confonants; *e. g.* brother he writes *brotherr*; after, *afterr*, &c. He has done this by defign, and charges thefe who fhall copy his book to be very careful to write thofe letters twice which he has written fo, as otherwife, he affures them, "they will not write "the word right." Hickes has taken notice of this peculiarity, but has not attempted to explain the author's reafons for it; and indeed without a more perfect knowledge than we now probably can have of the Saxon pronunciation they feem totally inexplicable. In the few lines which I think it neceffary to quote here as a fpecimen of the metre, I fhall venture (firft begging Ormin's pardon for difregarding his injunction) to leave out the fuperfluous letters, and I fhall alfo, for my own eafe as well as that of the reader, tranfcribe them in modern characters. The firft lines of Wanley's extract from mf. *Bod. Junius.* 1. [*Cat. Codd. mff. Septent.* p. 59.] will anfwer my purpofe as well as any other.

Nu, brother Walter, brother min after the flefhes kinde,
And brother min i Criftendom thurh fulluht and thurh trowthe,
And brother min i Godes hus yet o the thride wife,
Thurh that wit hafen taken ba an reghel boc to folghen
Under kanunkes-had and lif fwa fum Sant Awftin fette,
Ic hafe don fwa fum thu bad, and *forbed* (a) te thin wille,
Ic hafe wend intil Englifh Godfpelles halighe lare,
After that little wit that me min Drihten hafeth lened—

The reader will obferve, that in calling thefe verfes of fifteen fyllables I confider the words---*kinde*, *trowthe*, *wife*, *fette*, *wille*, *lare*---as diffyllables------The laws of metre require that they

(*a*) r. *forthed*, mf.

tetrameter iambic. The other piece (53), which is a moral poem upon old age, &c. is in rhyme, and in a metre much resembling the former, except that the verse of fifteen syllables is broken into two, of which the first should regularly contain eight and the second seven syllables; but the metre is not so exactly observed (at least in the copy which Hickes has followed) as it is in the Ormulum.

§ 5. In the next interval, from the latter end of

should be so considered as much as *folghen* and *lened*; and for the same reason *thride*, in ver. 3, and *hafe*, in ver. 6 and 7, are to be pronounced as consisting of two syllables.——It is the more extraordinary that neither Hickes nor Wanley should have perceived that Ormin wrote in metre, as he himself mentions his having added words for the sake of *filling* his *rhyme* or *verse*, for he calls it by both those names in the following passages;

> Ic hafe sett her o this bock among Godspelles wordes
> All thurh me selfen manig word, the *rhyme* swa to *fillen*——

And again,

> And ic ne mihte noht min *fers* ay with Godspelles wordes
> Well *fillen* all, and all forthi shulde ic well ofte nede
> Among Godspelles wordes don min word, min *fers* to *fillen*——

It is scarce necessary to remark that rhyme is here to be understood in its original sense, as denoting the whole verse, and not merely the consonancy of the final syllables. In the second quotation *fers* or *verse*, is substituted for it as a synonymous term. Indeed I doubt whether in the time of Ormin the word *rhyme* was, in any language, used singly to convey the idea of consonant terminations.

(53) A large extract from this poem has been printed by Hickes, [*Gram. Ang. Sax.* c. xxiv. p. 222,] but evidently from very incorrect mss. It begins thus;

> Ic am nu elder thanne ic wes
> A wintre and ec a lore;
> Ic ealdi more thanne ic dede,
> Mi wit oghte to bi more.

the reign of Henry III. to the middle of the fourteenth century, when we may suppose Chaucer was beginning to write, the number of English rhymers seems to have increased very much. Besides several whose names we know (54), it is probable that a great part of the anonymous authors, or rather translators (55), of the popular poems which (from their

(54) Robert of Gloucester and Robert of Brunne have been mentioned already.——To these may be added Richard Rolle, the hermit of Hampole, who died in 1349, after having composed a large quantity of English rhymes. See *Tanner, Bib. Brit. art. Hampole.*---Laurence Minot, who has left a collection of poems upon the principal events of the former parts of the reign of Edward III. mf. *Cotton, Galba. E.* ix.---Within the same period flourished the two poets who are mentioned with great commendations by Robert of Brunne [*App. to Pref. to Peter Langt.* p. xcix,] under the names of Erceldoun and of Kendale. We have no memorial, that I know, remaining of the latter besides this passage; but the former I take to have been the famous Thomas Leirmouth of Erceldoun, (or Ersilton, as it is now called, in the shire of Merch) who lived in the time of Edward I. and is generally distinguished by the honourable addition of The Rhymour. As the learned editor of Ancient Scottish poems, Edinburgh 1770, has for irrefragable reasons deprived this Thomas of a prophesy in verse which had usually been ascribed to him, [See *Mackenzie, art. Thomas Rhymour,*] I am inclined to make him some amends, by attributing to him a romance of Sir Tristrem, of which Robert of Brunne, an excellent judge ! (in the place above cited) says,

> Over gestes it has th' esteem
> Over all that is or was,
> If men it sayd as made Thomas.

(55) See Dr. Percy's curious Catalogue of English metrical romances, prefixed to the third volume of Reliques of Ancient Poesy. I am inclined to believe that we have no English romance prior to the age of Chaucer which is not a translation

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having been originally written in the Roman or French language) were called *Romances* flouriſhed about this

or imitation of ſome earlier French romance. The principal of thoſe which being built upon Engliſh ſtories bid the faireſt for having been originally compoſed in Engliſh are alſo extant in French. A conſiderable fragment of Hornchild (or Dan Horn, as he is there called) is to be found in French alexandrines in mſ. *Harl.* 527. The firſt part of Guy of Warwick is in French, in the octoſyllable metre, in mſ. *Harl.* 3775, and the laſt part in the ſame language and metre in mſ. *Bib. Reg.* 8 F. ix. How much may be wanting I have not had opportunity to examine. I have never ſeen Bevis in French; but Du Freſnoy in his *Biblioth. des Romans*, t. ii. p. 241, mentions a mſ. of *Le Roman de Beuves de Hantonne*, and another of *Le Roman de Beuves et Roſiane, en rime*; and the Italians, who were certainly more likely to borrow from the French than from the Engliſh language, had got among them a romance *di Buovo d'Antona*, before the year 1348. *Quadrio, Storia della Poeſia*, t. vi. p. 542.----However, I think it extremely probable that theſe three romances, though originally written in French, were compoſed in England, and perhaps by Engliſhmen, for we find that the general currency of the French language here engaged ſeveral of our own countrymen to uſe it in their compoſitions. Peter of Langtoft may be reckoned a dubious inſtance, as he is ſaid by ſome to have been a Frenchman; but Robert Groſſeteſte, the famous Biſhop of Lincoln in the time of Henry III. was a native of Suffolk, and yet he wrote his *Chaſteau d' Amours* and his *Manuel des Pechées* in French. [*Tanner's Bib. Brit.* and *Hearne's Pref. to Rob. of Glouceſter*, p. 58.]——There is a tranſlation of Cato in French verſe by Helis de Guinceſtre, *i. e.* Wincheſter, mſ. *Harl.* 4388, and a romance alſo in French verſe, which I ſuppoſe to be the original of the Engliſh *Ipomedon* [*Percy's Cat.* n. 22,] by Hue de Rotelande, is to be found in mſ. *Cotton, Veſp.* A. vii.---A French dialogue in verſe, mſ. *Bod.* 3904, entitled *La pleinte par entre mis Sire Henry de Lacy Counte de Nichole et Sire Wauter de Bybleſworth pur la croiſerie en la terre Seinte*, was moſt probably

time. It is unneceſſary to enter into particulars here concerning any of them, as they do not appear to

compoſed by the latter, who has alſo left us another work in French proſe. [See this article in *Tanner*, *Bibl. Brit.*]--Even as late as the time of Chaucer Gower wrote his *Speculum Meditantis* in French, but whether in verſe or proſe is uncertain. John Stowe, who was a diligent ſearcher after mſſ. had never ſeen this work, [*Annals*, p. 326,] nor does either Bale or Pitts ſet down the beginning of it, as they generally do of the books which they have had in their hands. However one French poem of Gower's has been preſerved. In mſ. *Harl.* 3869, it is connected with the *Confeſſio Amantis* by the following rubrick; "Puiſqu'il ad dit cidevant en Englois par voie d'eſſample la "ſotie de cellui qui par amours aime par eſpecial, dirra ore "apres en Francois a tout le monde en general une traitie ſe-"lonc les auctours, pour eſſampler les amants marriez, au fin "q'ils la foi de leurs ſeints eſpouſailles pourront par fine loialte "guarder, et al honeur de dieu ſalvement tenir." Pr. *Le creatour de toute creature.* It contains 55 ſtanzas of 7 verſes each, in the laſt of which is the following apology for the language;

Al' univerſite de tout le monde
Johan Gower ceſte Balade envoie,
Et ſi jeo nai de Francois la faconde,
Pardonetz moi qe jeo de ceo forſvoie;
Jeo ſuis Englois, ſi quier par tiele voie
Eſtre excuſe.——

Chaucer himſelf ſeems to have had no great opinion of the performances of his countrymen in French, [*Prol. to Teſt. of Love, ed.* 1542.] "Certes," (ſays he) "there ben ſome that "ſpeke thyr poyſy mater in Frenche, of whyche ſpeche the "Frenche men have as good a fantaſye as we have in hearing "of French mennes Englyſhe." And he afterwards concludes with his uſual good ſenſe; "Let then clerkes endyten in La-"tyn, for they have the propertye of ſcience and the know-"inge in that facultye, and lette Frenchmen in theyr Frenche "alſo endyte theyr queynt termes, for it is kyndly to theyr "mouthes, and let us ſhewe our fantaſyes in ſuche wordes as "we lerneden of our dames tonge."

have invented or imported from abroad any new modes of Verſification by which the art could be at all advanced (56), or even to have improved thoſe

(56) It was neceſſary to qualify the aſſertion that the rhymers of this period "did not invent or import from abroad any new "modes of Verſification," as in fact Robert of Brunne (in the paſſage referred to in n. 54,) has mentioned three or four ſorts of verſe different from any which we have hitherto met with, and which appear to have been much cultivated (if not introduced) by the writers who flouriſhed a little before himſelf: he calls them Cowee, Strangere, Enterlace, and Baſton. Mr. Bridges, in a ſenſible letter to Thomas Hearne [*App. to Pref. to Peter Langt.* p. ciii,] pointed out theſe terms as particularly needing an explanation; but Thomas choſe rather to ſtuff his book with accounts of the nunnery at Little Gidding, &c. which coſt him only the labour of tranſcribing. There can be little doubt, I think, that the rhymes called Cowée and Enterlacée were derived from the *Verſus Caudati* and *Interlaqueati* of the Latin rhymers of that age. Though Robert of Brunne, in his Prologue, profeſſes not to attempt theſe elegancies of compoſition, yet he has intermixed ſeveral paſſages in rhyme Couwée; [See p. 266, 273, 6, 7, 8, 9, *et al.*] and almoſt all the latter part of his work from the conqueſt is written in rhyme Enterlacée, each couplet rhyming in the middle as well as at the end. [This was the nature of the *Verſus Interlaqueati*, according to the following ſpecimen, mſ. *Harl.* 1002.;

Plauſus Grecorum | lux cecis et via claudis |
Incola celorum | virgo digniſſima laudis.]

I cannot pretend to define the exact form of the rhyme called Baſton, but I dare ſay it received its appellation from the Carmelite Robert Baſton, a celebrated Latin rhymer in the reigns of Edward I. and II. [See *Tanner, Bibl. Brit.* in v. and *Hearne's Pref. to Fordun*, p. 226, *et ſeq.*] His verſes upon the battle of Bannockburn, in 1313, are printed in the Appendix to Fordun, p. 1570: they afford inſtances of all the whimſical combinations of rhymes which can well be conceived to find a place

which were before in uſe. On the contrary, as their works were intended for the ear more than for the eye, to be recited rather than read, they were apt to be more attentive to their rhymes than to the exactneſs of their metres, from a preſumption, I ſuppoſe, that the defect or redundance of a ſyllable might be eaſily covered in the recitation, eſpecially if accompanied, as it often was, by ſome muſical inſtrument.

§ 6. Such was, in general, the ſtate of Engliſh poetry at the time when Chaucer probably made his firſt eſſays. The uſe of rhyme was eſtabliſhed, not excluſively, (for the author of The Viſions of Pierce Ploughman wrote after the year 1350 (57) without rhyme)

in the Latin heroick metre.------As to rhyme Strangere, I ſuſpect (upon conſidering the whole paſſage in Robert of Brunne) that is was rather a general name, including all ſorts of *uncommon* rhymes, than appropriated to any particular ſpecies.-----Upon the whole, if this account of theſe new modes of Verſification ſhall be allowed to be any thing like the truth, I hope I ſhall be thought juſtified in having added, " that the art could not be at all advanced by them."

(57) This is plain from fol. 68, edit. 1550, where the year 1350 is named as a year of great ſcarcity. Indeed from the mention of the kitten in the tale of the Rattons, fol. 3, 4, I ſhould ſuſpect that the author wrote at the very end of the reign of Edward III. when Richard was become heir-apparent. ----The Viſions of *(i. e. concerning)* Pierce Ploughman are generally aſcribed to one Robert Langland; but the beſt mſ. that I have ſeen make the Chriſtian name of the author William, without mentioning his ſurname: ſo in mſ. *Cotton, Veſp.* B. xvi, at the end of page 1, is this rubrick; " Hic incipit ſecundus paſſus de viſione *Willelmi* de Petro Plouhman." And in ver. 5 of p. 2, inſtead of " *And ſayde*, ſonne, *ſlepeſt thou?*" the mſ. has " *And ſayde*, Wille, *ſlepeſt thou?*" See alſo the account of mſ. *Harl.* 2376, in the Harleian catalogue.----I can-

but very generally, so that in this respect he had little to do but to imitate his predecessors. The metrical part of our poetry was capable of more improvement, by the polishing of the measures already in use, as well as by the introducing of new modes of Versification, and how far Chaucer actually contributed to the improvement of it in both or either of these particulars we are now to consider.

§ 7. With respect to the regular metres then in use they may be reduced, I think, to four. First, the

not help observing that these Visions have been printed from so faulty and imperfect a ms. that the author, whoever he was, would find it difficult to recognize his own work. However, the judgment of the learned Doctors Hickes and Percy, [*Gram. A. S.* p. 217.—*Rel. of Anc. Poet.* v. ii. p. 260,] with respect to the laws of his Versification is confirmed by the mss. Each of his verses is in fact a distich composed of two verses after the Saxon form, without rhyme, and not reducible to any certain metre. I do not mean to say that a few of his verses may not be picked out consisting of fourteen and fifteen syllables, and resembling the metre used in the Ormulum, and there are still more of twelve and thirteen syllables, which might pass for very tolerable alexandrines; but then, on the other hand, there is a great number of his verses (warranted for genuine by the best mss.) which cannot by any mode of pronunciation be extended beyond nine or ten syllables; so that it is impossible to imagine that his verse was intended to consist of any determinate number of syllables. It is as clear that his accents, upon which the harmony of modern rythms depends, are not disposed according to any regular system. The first division of a verse is often trochaick, and the last iambick, and *vice versa*. The only rule which he seems really to have prescribed to himself is what has been taken notice of by his first editor, *viz.* "to have three wordes at the leaste in every verse whiche be-"ginne with some one letter." *Crowley's Pref. to edit.* 1550.

long iambick metre (58), consisting of not more than fifteen nor less than fourteen syllables, and broken

(58) The most perfect example of this metre has been given above, (n. 52,) from the Ormulum. Each verse is composed of fifteen syllables, and broken by a cæsura on the eighth, which always terminates a word. The accents are so disposed upon the even syllables, particularly the eighth and fourteenth, as to produce the true iambick cadence.----The learned reader will recollect that the Political Verses (as they are called) of Tzetzes and others, who wrote when the Greek versification was become rythmical instead of metrical, are chiefly of this form. [See *Du Cange*, v. *Politici versus*.] And it is remarkable that about the time of our Orm Ciullo d'Alcamo, a poet of Sicily, where the Greek was still a living language, [*Montf. Palæog. Gr.* l. vi,] made use of these verses of fifteen syllables, intermixed with hendecasyllables, in the only production of his which has been preserved. [*Raccolta dell' Allacci*, p. 408—16.] The first stanza is quoted by Crescimbeni, [*Istor. d. V. P.* l. i. p. 3.] who however labours very much to persuade us that the verses in question ought not to be considered as verses of fifteen syllables, but as containing each of them two verses, the one of eight and the other of seven syllables. If this were allowed the nature of the verse would not be altered; [See before, n. 54,] but the supposition is highly improbable, as by that distribution there would be three verses in each stanza not rhyming. In what follows Crescimbeni shews very plainly that he had not adverted to the real nature of Ciullo's measure, for he compares it with the noted tetrameter, *Gallias Cæsar subegit, Nicomedes Cæsarem*, which is a trochaick, whereas these verses of Ciullo are evidently iambicks, like those of Orm.—I suspect that if we could recover the genuine text of Robert of Gloucester he would be found to have written in this metre: it was used by Warner in his Albion's England (another chronicle in verse) in the latter end of Queen Elizabeth's reign; and Gascoigne about the same time [*Instruction concerning the making of Verse in Eng. signature* U ii,] speaks of the couplet, consisting of one verse of twelve and another of four-

by a cæsura at the eighth syllable. Secondly, the alexandrine metre (59), consisting of not more than

teen syllables, as *the commonest sort of verse* then in use. It may be proper to observe that the metre which Gascoigne calls a verse of fourteen syllables is exactly the same with what is called above a verse of fifteen syllables, just as the French alexandrine may be composed indifferently of twelve or thirteen syllables, and the Italian hendecasyllable of ten, eleven, or even twelve. The general rule in all these kinds of verse is, that when they consist of the greater number of syllables the superfluous syllables, as they may be called, are never accented.

(59) Robert of Brunne, in his translation of Peter of Langtoft, seems to have used the alexandrine verse in imitation of his original; but his metre (at least in Hearne's copy) is frequently defective, especially in the latter part of his work, where he affects to rhyme at the cæsura as well as at the end of his verse.——The alexandrine metre is generally agreed to have been first used in the *Roman d'Alexandre*, by Lambert li Cors and Alexandre de Bernay, toward the latter end of the 12th century. [*Du Verdier, Bibl.* p. 780, *Fauchet*, l. ii.] A late French antiquary (M. L'Eveque de la Ravaliere) in his history *Des Revolutions de la Langue Francoise*, p. 165, has combated this opinion upon the authority of some alexandrine verses which he has discovered, as he supposes, in the *Roman de Rou*. I shall only observe that no such verses are to be found in a very good ms. of the *Roman de Rou*, [*Bib. Reg.* 4 C. xi,] and I very much suspect that upon an accurate examination they will appear to have been not the work of Wace, but of some later author. A similar mistake of an interpolation or continuation for the original work has led another very able antiquary of the same nation to place the *Roman de Rou* in the 14th century. [*Mem. de l'Acad. des I. & B. L. tom.* xv. p. 582.] There can be no doubt that Wace wrote the *Roman de Rou* about the middle of the 12th century. See before, n. 47.——They who attend only to the length of the alexandrine verse will naturally derive it from the trimeter iambick rythms which were in frequent use in the beginning of the 12th century; [See *Orderic. Vital.* l. ii. p. 404, 409, 410, 415, *et al.*] but

thirteen syllables nor less than twelve, with a cæsura at the sixth. Thirdly, the octosyllable metre, which was in reality the ancient dimeter iambick. Fourthly, the stanza of six verses, of which the first, second, fourth, and fifth, were in the complete octosyllable metre, and the third and last catalectick, *i. e.* wanting a syllable, or even two.

§ 8. In the first of these metres it does not appear that Chaucer ever composed at all, (for I presume no one can imagine that he was the author of Gamelyn) or in the second; and in the fourth we have nothing of his but the Rhyme of Sire Thopas, which being intended to ridicule the vulgar romancers, seems to have been purposely written in their favourite metre. In the third, or octosyllable metre (60), he has left several compositions, particularly an

when it is considered that the cæsura at the sixth syllable, so essential to the alexandrine metre, was hardly ever observed in the trimeter iambick, it will seem more probable, I think, that the inventor of the alexandrine took for his model what has been called above the long iambick, but for some reason or other retrenched a foot or two syllables in the first hemistick.

(60) Though I call this the octosyllable metre, from what I apprehend to have been its original form, it often consists of nine and sometimes of ten syllables, but the eighth is always the last accented syllable.—The oldest French poems, to the latter end of the 12th century, are all in this metre; but upon the invention of the alexandrine the octosyllable verse seems by degrees to have been confined to the several species of lighter compositions, in which it is still used. Here in England Robert of Brunne, in his Preface to his translation of *Le Brut*, [*App. to Pref. to Peter Langtoft*, p. 100,] calls it *light rime*, in contradistinction to *strange rime*, of which he has just enumerated several sorts, [see n. 56,] and says that he wrote in it *for luf of the lewed man*: and Chaucer himself speaks of it in nearly the same terms in the beginning of the third book of The House of Fame;

imperfect translation of the *Roman de la Rose*, which was probably one of his earliest performances, The

> God of science and of light,
> Apollo, thurgh thy grete might
> This little last book now thou gye;
> Not that I will for maystrye
> Here art potential be shewde,
> But for the ryme is *light and lewde*,
> Yet make it somewhat agreable
> Though some verse fayle in a syllable.

The learned editor of a part of The Canterbury Tales [London 1737, 8vo,] has quoted this passage [*Pref.* p. 25,] as proving, by Chaucer's own confession, that he did not write in equal measure.——It certainly proves that he did not write in equal measure *in this particular poem* of The House of Fame; but it proves also that he knew well what the laws of measure were, and that he thought that any deviation from them required an apology. Is it just to conclude, because Chaucer has owned a neglect of those laws in one work, written in light metre, and in which he formally disclaims any exertion of art, [*ver.* 4, 5,] that therefore he has been equally negligent of them in his other works, written in the gravest metre, and in which he may reasonably be supposed to have employed his utmost skill of Versification? In the Troilus, for instance, [*b.* v.] he has a solemn prayer that none *miswrite* or *mismetre* his book: can we suppose that it was not originally written in metre?——But I shall not enter any farther into the general argument concerning Chaucer's Versification, which will more properly be discussed in the text: my business here was only to prevent the reader from coming to the question with a preconceived opinion (upon the authority of the learned editor above-mentioned) that "Chaucer himself," in this passage of The House of Fame, "has put the matter out of dispute."—To return again to the octosyllable metre. Its constitution is such, that the first syllable may often be dropped without much prejudice to the harmony of the verse, and as far as I have observed that is the syllable in which Chaucer's verses of this kind generally fail. We have an instance in the first line of the passage quoted above——

Houfe of Fame, The Dethe of the Ducheffe Blanche, and a poem called his Dreme; upon all which it will be fufficient here to obferve in general, that if he had given no other proofs of his poetical faculty thefe alone muft have fecured to him the preeminence above all his predeceffors and contemporaries in point of Verfification.

§ 9. But by far the moft confiderable part of Chaucer's Works is written in that kind of metre which we now call the Heroick (61), either in diftichs or ftanzas;

God of fcience and of light———

founds as well (to my ear at leaft) as———

Thou God of fcience and of light———

according to Mr. Urry's correction. The reafon, I apprehend, is, that the meafure though of another fort is ftill regular; inftead of a dimeter iambick it is a dimeter trochaick catelectick.—But no fuch liberty can be taken in the heroick metre without totally deftroying its harmony, and therefore when the above-mentioned learned editor fays [*Pref.* p. 26,] that the numbers of Chaucer "are always mufical, whether they "want or exceed their complement," I doubt his partiality for his author has carried him too far. I have no conception myfelf that an heroick verfe, which wants a fyllable of its complement, can be mufical or even tolerable. The line which he has quoted from The Knighte's Tale, [*ver.* 1228, of this edit.]

Not in purgatory but in helle———

however you manage it, (whether you make a paufe, or give two times to the firft fyllable, as he rather advifes)—can never pafs for a verfe of any form, nor did Chaucer intend that it fhould; he wrote (according to the beft mff.)———

Not *only* in purgatory but in helle———

(61) The heroick metre with us, as with the Italians, is of the iambick form, and confifts of ten, eleven, or twelve, fyllables, the tenth however being in all cafes the laft accented fyllable. The French have the fame metre, but with them it can

and as I have not been able to discover any instance of this metre being used by any English poets before

scarce contain more than eleven syllables, as their language has few (if any) words in which the accent is laid upon the antepenultima. Though we have a great number of such words we seldom use the verse of twelve syllables. The extraordinary difficulty of rhyming with three syllables is a sufficient reason for excluding it from all works which are written in rhyme, and in blank metre the two unaccented syllables at the end make the close of the verse heavy and languid. Milton, for the sake of variety of measure, has inserted a very few of these verses which the Italians call *sdruccioli* in his heroick poems, but they are more commonly, and I think more properly, employed in dramatick compositions, where a continued stateliness of numbers is less requisite.-----The generical name for this metre in Italy is *endecasyllabo*, and the verses of ten and twelve syllables are distinguished by additions, the former being called *endecasyllabo tronco*, and the latter *endecasyllabo sdrucciolo*. This proves, I think, that the verse of eleven syllables was the primitive metre, and principally used, as it still is, in Italy; and it will appear hereafter, if I am not mistaken, that the greatest part of Chaucer's heroick verses, when properly written and pronounced, are in this measure.——A learned person, whose favours I have already acknowledged in the Glossary, v. *Gore*, cannot acquiesce in this notion, "that the "greatest part of Chaucer's heroick verses, when properly "written and pronounced, are verses of eleven syllables," and for a proof of the contrary he refers me particularly to The Nonne's Preeste's Tale, *ver.* 14970, and the verses following and preceding. I am sorry that by an unguarded expression I should have exposed myself to a controversy which can only be decided by a careful examination of the final syllables of between thirty and forty thousand lines. It would answer my purpose as well to say *a great part*, instead of *the greatest part*; but in support of my first idea I must be permitted to observe that I have carefully examined a hundred lines which precede and as many which follow *ver.* 14970, and I find that a clear-

him, I am much inclined to suppose that he was the first introducer of it into our language. It had long been practised in France, in the northern as well as the southern provinces; and in Italy, within the last fifty years before Chaucer wrote, it had been cultivated with the greatest assiduity and success, in preference to every other metre, by Dante, Petrarch, and Boccace. When we reflect that two of Chaucer's juvenile productions, the Palamon and Arcite and the Troilus, were in a manner translated from the Theseida and the Filostrato of Boccace (62), both written in the common

majority of them, *as they are printed*, end in *e* feminine, and consequently, according to my hypothesis, have an eleventh syllable. I observe too that several more *ought to have been printed* as ending with an *e* feminine, but whether the omission of it should be imputed to the defectiveness of the mss. or to the negligence of the collator I cannot be certain. See the concluding note of the *Essay*, &c. p. 170.

(62) It is so little a while since the world has been informed that the Palamon and Arcite of Chaucer was taken from the Theseida of Boccace, that it would not have been surprising if another century had elapsed without our knowing that our countryman had also borrowed his Troilus from the Filostrato of the same author, as the Filostrato is more scarce, and much less famous, even in Italy than the Theseida. The first suspicion which I entertained of this theft was from reading the title of the Filostrato at large in *Saxii Hist. Lit. Typog. Mediolan. ad an.* 1498; and I afterwards found in *Montfaucon's Bibl. mss.* t. ii. p. 793, among the King of France's mss. one with this title, *Philostrato, dell'amorose fatiche di Troilo per Gio. Boccaccio.* [See also *Quad.*t. vi. p. 473.] I had just employed a person to procure me some account of this ms. from Paris when I had the good fortune to meet with a printed copy in the very curious collection of the Rev. Mr. Crofts. The title is *Il Fylostrato, che tracta de lo innamoramento de Troylo e Gryseida; et de molte altre infinite battaglie. Impresso nella inclita cita de Milano per*

Italian hendecasyllable verse, it cannot but appear extremely probable that his metre also was copied

magistro Uldericho Scinzenzeler nell anno m, cccc, lxxxxviii, *a di* xxvii *di mese de Septembre, in* 4°. By the favour of the learned owner (who is as free in the communication as he has been zealous in the collection of his literary treasures) I had soon an opportunity of satisfying myself that Chaucer was to the full as much obliged to Boccace in his Troilus as in his Knighte's Tale.—The doubts which Quadrio mentions [t. vi. p. 474,] whether the Filostrato was really a work of Boccace, are sufficiently answered (as he observes) by the concurring testimony of several ancient mss. which expresly name him as the author: and it may be remarked that Boccace himself, in his Decameron, has made the same honourable mention of this poem as of the Theseida, though without acknowledging either for his own. In the introduction to the sixth day he says that "Dioneo insieme con Lauretta *di Troilo et di Creseida* "cominciarono cantare," just as afterwards, in the conclusion of the seventh day, we are told that the same "Dioneo et "la Fiammetta gran pezza cantarono insieme *d'Arcita et di* "*Palemone.*"———It may be not improper here to observe further that a third poem, which is mentioned in the Decameron in the same manner with the Theseida and the Filostrato, was also probably one of Boccace's own compositions. In the conclusion of the third day it is said, that "Dioneo et "la Fiammetta cominciarono a contare *di Messer Guiglielmo* "*et della dama del vergiu.*" There is an old French romance upon this subject, as I apprehend, in ms. *Bodl.* 2386; it is entitled *Le Romant de la Chastelaine du Vergy*, and begins thus;

Une maniere de gens sont
Qui d'estre loyaulx semblant font——
Ainsi qu'il avint en Bourgoigne
D'un chevalier preux et hardi
Et de la dame du Vergy.———

The story is the same in the main with that of the 70th novel in the Heptameron of the Queen of Navarre, from which I suppose the more modern *Histoire de la Comtesse du Vergi*, Par.

from the ſame original; and yet I cannot find that the form of his ſtanza in the Troilus (conſiſting of ſeven verſes) was ever uſed by Boccace, though it is to be met with among the poems of the King of Navarre and of the Provencal rhymers (63). Whichever

1722, is taken.——I cannot find that any Italian poem upon this ſubject is now extant; but the unaccountable neglect with which the poetry of Boccace has been long treated by thoſe very countrymen of his who idolize his proſe makes the ſuppoſition, I think, not improbable that a ſmall piece of this ſort may have been ſuffered to periſh, or even to lurk at this day, unpubliſhed and unnoticed in ſome Italian library.

(63) See *Poeſies du Roi de Navarre*, *Chanſ.* xvi, xviii, xxvii, xxxiii, lviii. The only difference is that the two laſt verſes, which in Chaucer's ſtanza form a diſtinct couplet, are made by Thibaut to rhyme with the firſt and third. In a mſ. of Provencal poetry (in the collection of the Rev. Mr. Crofts) I find one piece by Folket de Marſeilles (who died about 1213) in which the ſtanza is formed exactly agreeable to Chaucer's.——This ſtanza of ſeven verſes being firſt introduced, I apprehend, by Chaucer, was long the favourite meaſure of the poets who ſucceeded him: in the time of Gaſcoigne it had acquired the name of *Rithme royall*; "and ſurely," ſays he, "it is a royall "kinde of verſe, ſerving beſt for grave diſcourſes." [*Inſtruction concerning the making of Verſe, ſignature* U 1 b.] Rowley, who wrote in the reigns of Henry VI. and Edward IV. with an uncommon harmony of numbers, has made the laſt verſe of this ſtanza an alexandrine, and ſo has Milton in ſome of his juvenile compoſitions.—— As the Theſeida and the Filoſtrato of Boccace are both written in the octave ſtanza, of which he is often though improperly called the inventor, [ſee *Paſquier, Recherches*, l. vii. c. 3.] it ſeems extraordinary that Chaucer ſhould never have adopted that ſtanza; even when he uſes a ſtanza of eight verſes (as in The Monke's Tale) it is conſtituted very differently from the Italian octave. I obſerve, by the way, that Chaucer's ſtanza of eight verſes, with the addition of an alexandrine, is the ſtanza in which Spenſer has compoſed his Faery Queen.

he shall be supposed to have followed, whether the French or Italians, it is certain that he could not want in either language a number of models of correct and harmonious Versification, and the only question will be, whether he had ability and industry enough to imitate that part of their excellency?

§ 10. In discussing this question we should always have in mind that the correctness and harmony of an English verse depends entirely upon its being composed of a certain number of syllables, and its having the accents of those syllables properly placed. In order therefore to form any judgment of the Versification of Chaucer, it is necessary that we should know the syllabical value (if I may use the expression) of his words, and the accentual value of his syllables, as they were commonly pronounced (64) in his time; for without that knowledge it is not more probable that we should determine justly upon the exactness of his metres, than that we should be able to cast up rightly an account stated in coins of a former age of whose current rates and denominations we are totally ignorant.

§ 11. Let us consider a moment how a sensible critick in the Augustan age would have proceeded if

(64) Monf. L'Eveque de la Ravaliere, in his discourse *de l'ancienneté des Chansons Françoises*, prefixed to the *Poësies du Roi de Navarre*, has the same observation with respect to the old French poets. "Leur Poësie," says he, p. 227, "marque "combien ils respectoint cette régle [of exact rhyming,] mais "pour en juger aujourdhui, *ainsi que de la mesure de leurs "Vers*, il faut prononcer les mots comme eux."——He is vindicating the ancient French bards from an unjust and ignorant censure of Boileau in his *Art. Poet. Chant.* i.; so that it should seem a great poet is not of course a judicious antiquary. See above, n. 4, a censure of Chaucer's verse by our Dryden, who was certainly a great poet.

called upon to examine a work of Ennius (65). When he found that a great proportion of the verſes were ſtrictly conformable to the ordinary rules of metre, he would probably not ſcruple to conclude that ſuch a conformity muſt have been produced by art and deſign, and not by mere chance. On the other hand, when he found that in ſome verſes the number of feet, to appearance, was either deficient or redundant, that in others the feet were ſeemingly compoſed of too few or too many ſyllables, of ſhort ſyllables in the place of long, or of long in the place of ſhort, he would not, I think, immediately condemn the old bard as having all at once forgotten the fundamental principles of his art, or as having wilfully or negligently deviated from them; he would firſt, I preſume, inquire whether all theſe irregularities were in the genuine text of his author, or only the miſtakes of copyiſts; he would inquire further, by comparing the genuine text with other contemporary writings and monuments, whether many things which appeared irregular were not in truth ſufficiently regular, either juſtified by the conſtant practice or ex-

(65) Though Ennius died not an hundred and fifty years before what may be called the age of Auguſtus, his language and verſification are ſo different from thoſe of Ovid (for inſtance) that I much queſtion whether his poems were better reliſhed, or even underſtood, by the vulgar Romans in that age than the Works of Chaucer are now by the generality of readers. However a great many of his verſes are as ſmoothly turned as thoſe of Ovid himſelf, and it is well known that Virgil has not ſcrupled to incorporate ſeveral of them into his divine Æneid. At the ſame time whoever caſts an eye over the Fragments of his Annals, as collected by Columna, Heſſelius, and others, will find frequent examples of all the ſeeming irregularities alluded to in the text.

cused by the allowed licenfe of the age: where authority failed he would have recourfe (but foberly) to etymology and analogy; and if after all a few paffages remained not reducible to the ftrict laws of metre by any of the methods above-mentioned, if he were really (as I have fuppofed him) a fenfible critick he would be apt rather to expect patiently the folution of his difficulties from more correct manufcripts, or a more complete theory of his author's verfification, than to cut the knot by deciding peremptorily that the work was compofed without any regard to metrical rules.

§ 12. I beg leave to purfue the fame courfe with refpect to Chaucer. The great number of verfes founding complete even to our ears, which is to be found in all the leaft corrected copies of his Works, authorizes us to conclude that he was not ignorant of the laws of metre. Upon this conclufion it is impoffible not to ground a ftrong prefumption that he intended to obferve the fame laws in the many other verfes which feem to us irregular; and if this was really his intention, what reafon can be affigned fufficient to account for his having failed fo grofsly and repeatedly, as is generally fuppofed, in an operation which every balladmonger in our days, man, woman, or child, is known to perform with the moft unerring exactnefs, and without any extraordinary fatigue?

§ 13. The offences againft metre in an Englifh verfe, as has partly been obferved before, muft arife either from a fuperfluity or deficiency of fyllables, or from the accents being improperly placed.

§ 14. With refpect to the firft fpecies of irregularity, I have not taken notice of any fuperfluities in Chaucer's verfes but what may be reduced to juft

measure by the usual practices (66) of even modern poets; and this, by the way, is a strong proof of his real attention to metrical rules; for otherwise, if he had written without any restraint of that kind, a certain proportion of his deviations from measure must in all probability have been on the side of excess.

§ 15. But a great number of Chaucer's verses labour under an apparent deficiency of a syllable or two. In some of these perhaps the defect may still be supplied from mss. but for the greatest part I am persuaded no such assistance is to be expected (67);

(66) It is unnecessary to trouble the reader with an enumeration of syncope, apostrophus, synecphonesis, &c.

Quicquid habent telorum armamentaria vatum.

They may all, I think, be comprehended in our language under this one general principle, that an English verse, though chiefly composed of feet of two syllables, is capable of receiving feet of three syllables in every part of it, provided only one of the three syllables be accented.---In short, whoever can taste the metrical harmony of the following lines of Milton will not be embarassed how to dispose of the (seemingly) superfluous syllables which he may meet with in Chaucer;

P. L. ii. 123. Ominous | conjecture on the whole success.
302. A pil | lar of ſtáte | ; deep on his front engraven---
658. Celestial spir | its in bón | dage, nor the abyss--
v. 495. No inconvenient di | et, nor tóo | light fare.
vii. 122. Things not revealed, which the invis | ible King---

(67) I would not be thought to undervalue the mss. which I have not seen, or to discourage those who may have inclination and opportunity to consult them; I only mean to say that where the text is supported (as it generally is in this edit.) by the concurrence of two or three good mss. and the sense is clear and complete, we may safely consider it as tolerably cor-

and therefore ſuppoſing the text in theſe caſes to be correct, it is worth conſidering whether the verſe alſo may not be made correct by adopting, in certain words, a pronunciation different indeed from modern practice, but which we have reaſon to believe was uſed by the Author himſelf.

For inſtance, in the genitive caſe ſingular and the plural number of nouns (which as has been remarked above in the time of Chaucer had the ſame expreſſion) there can be no doubt that ſuch words as *ſhoures*, ver. 1, *croppes*, ver. 7, *ſhires*, ver. 15, *lordes*, ver. 47, &c. were regularly pronounced as conſiſting of two ſyllables: whenever they are uſed as monoſyllables it muſt be conſidered as a poetical licenſe, warranted however even then (as we may preſume from the natural progreſs of our language) by the practice of innaccurate ſpeakers in common converſation.

In like manner we may be ſure that *ed*, the regular termination of the paſt tenſe and its participle, made or contributed to make a ſecond ſyllable in the words *perced*, ver. 2, *bathed*, ver. 3, *loved*, ver. 45, *wered*, ver. 75, &c. (68.) The firſt ſtep toward re-

rect. In the courſe of the Notes I ſhall have occaſion to point out ſeveral paſſages in which either the diſagreement of the good mſſ. or the obſcurity of their readings makes a further inquiry abſolutely neceſſary in order to ſettle the text.

(68) It appears from the Preface to the laſt edition of Chaucer's Works, Lond. 1721, that Mr. Urry, the undertaker of that edition, had the ſame opinion with reſpect to the pronunciation of the final ſyllables in this and the laſt mentioned inſtance, and that it was his intention to diſtinguiſh thoſe ſyllables, *whenever they were to be pronounced*, by printing them with an *i* inſtead of an *e*, as *ſhouris*, *ſhiris*, *percid*, *lovid*, &c. As ſuch a diſtinction is entirely unſupported by the mſſ. and muſt neceſſarily very much disfigure the orthography of the lan-

ducing words of this form to monosyllables seems to have been to shorten the last syllable, either by transposing the final letters, as in—*wolde*, ver. 144. *fayde*, ver. 763, &c. or by throwing away the *d*, as in—*coste*, ver. 1910, *caste*, ver. 2083, &c. In both these cases the words still remained of two syllables, the final *e* being sounded as an *e* feminine; but they were prepared to lose their last syllable by the easy license of changing an *e* feminine into an *e* mute, or of dropping it entirely, according to the modern practice.

§ 16. But nothing will be found of such extensive use for supplying the deficiencies of Chaucer's metre as the pronunciation of the *e* feminine; and as that pronunciation has been for a long time totally antiquated, it may be proper here to suggest some reasons for believing (independently of any arguments to be drawn from the practice of Chaucer himself) that the final

guage, I cannot think that an editor has a right to introduce it upon ever so plausible a pretence. A shorter, and in my opinion a less exceptionable, method would have been to have distinguished the syllables of this sort, *whenever they were to be contracted*, by adding a sign of syncope, thus, *shoure's*, *shire's*, *perce'd*, *love'd*. But after all, a reader who cannot perform such operations for himself had better not trouble his head about the Versification of Chaucer.—Mr. Urry had also discovered that the final *e* (of which I shall treat more at large in the next section) often made a syllable in Chaucer's verse, and (according to the Preface quoted above) he "always marked with an accent, when he judged it necessary to pronounce it, as *swetè*, *halvè*, *smalè*, ver. 5, 8, 9." I have the same objection to this mark that I have to innovations in orthography, and besides that, it would be apt to mislead the ignorant reader (for whom only it can be intended) by making him suppose that the *e* so marked was really to be accented, whereas the true *e* feminine is always to be pronounced with an obscure evanescent sound, and is incapable of bearing any stress or accent.

e in our ancient language was very generally pronounced as the *e* feminine is at this day by the French.

With refpect to words imported directly from France, it is certainly quite natural to fuppofe that for fome time they retained their native pronunciation, whether they were nouns fubftantive, as *hofte*, ver. 753, *face*, ver. 1580, &c.—or adjectives, as *large*, ver. 755, *ftrange*, ver. 13, &c.—or verbs, as *grante*, ver. 12756, *preche*, ver. 12327, &c.; and it cannot be doubted that in thefe and other fimilar words in the French language the final *e* was always pronounced, as it ftill is, fo as to make them diffyllables.

We have not indeed fo clear a proof of the original pronunciation of the Saxon part (69) of our language; but we know, from general obfervation, that

(69) This is owing to the Saxons not having left us any metrical compofitions, as has been obferved before, p. 126. Hickes complains [*Gr. A. S.* c. xxiii. § 7,] "that it is difficult to know "of how many fyllables a Saxon verfe fometimes confifts, for "this reafon among others, *quod non conftat quomodo voces in* "e *fœminino vel obfcuro terminatæ pronuntiandæ funt in carmine.*" He might (perhaps with more propriety) have complained that it is difficult to know how words ending in *e* feminine are to be pronounced in a Saxon verfe, becaufe it is uncertain of how many fyllables any of their verfes confifted. I have mentioned in the text two cafes of words abbreviated, in which I think we might conclude from general reafoning that the final *e* was pronounced. As this theory, with refpect to thefe words, is entirely confirmed by the practice of Orm, (the moft authentick metrical compofer that we have in our ancient language) it would not perhaps be unreafonable to infer that the practice of Orm, in other words of Saxon original in which the final *e* is pronounced, is confonant to the old Saxon ufage. However that may be, the practice of Orm muft certainly be admitted to prove that fuch a pronunciation prevailed at leaft 150 years before Chaucer.

all changes of pronunciation are ufually made by fmall degrees; and therefore when we find that a great number of thofe words which in Chaucer's time ended in *e* originally ended in *a*, we may reafonably prefume that our anceftors firft paffed from the broader found of *a* to the thinner found of *e* feminine, and not at once from *a* to *e* mute. Befides, if the final *e* in fuch words was not pronounced why was it added? From the time that it has confeffedly ceafed to be pronounced it has been gradually omitted in them, except where it may be fuppofed of ufe to lengthen or foften (70) the preceding fyllable, as in——*hope*, *name*, &c. But according to the ancient orthography it terminates many words of Saxon original where it cannot have been added for any fuch purpofe, as *herte*, *childe*, *olde*, *wilde*, &c. In thefe therefore we muft fuppofe that it was pronounced as an *e* feminine, and made part of a fecond fyllable, and fo, by a parity of reafon, in all others in which, as in thefe, it appears to have been fubftituted for the Saxon *a*.

Upon the fame grounds we may prefume that in words terminated according to the Saxon form in *en*, fuch as the infinitive modes and plural numbers of verbs, and a great variety of adverbs and prepofitions, the *n* only was at firft thrown away, and the

(70) In moft of the words in which the final *e* has been omitted its ufe in lengthening or foftening the preceding fyllable has been fupplied by an alteration in the orthography of that fyllable; thus in--*grete*, *mete*, *ftele*, *rede*, *dere*--in which the firft *e* was orginially long as clofing a fyllable, it has (fince they have been pronounced as monofyllables) been changed either into *ea*, as in—*great*, *meat*, *fteal*, *read*, *dear*; or into *ee*, as in—*greet*, *meet*, *fteel*, *reed*, *deer*. In like manner the *o* in--*bote*, *fole*, *dore*, *gode*, *mone*, has been changed either into *oa*, as in---*boat*, *foal*; or into *oo*, as in---*door*, *good*, *moon*.

e, which then became final, continued for a long time to be pronounced as well as written.

These considerations seem sufficient to make us believe that the pronunciation of the *e* feminine is founded on the very nature of both the French and Saxon parts of our language; and therefore though we may not be able to trace the reasons of that pronunciation in all cases so plainly as in those which have been just mentioned, we may safely, I think, conclude with the learned Wallis (71), that what is generally considered as an *e* mute in our language,

(71) *Gram. Ling. Ang.* c. i. § 2. "Originem vero hujus *e* muti, "nequis miretur unde devenerit, hanc esse judico; nempe, "quod antiquitus pronunciatum fuerit, sed obscuro sono, sicut "Gallorum *e* fœmininum." He afterwards adds, Certissimum "autem hujus rei indicium est ex antiquis poetis petendam; "apud quos reperitur illud *e* promiscuè vel constituere vel non "constituere novam syllabam, prout ratio carminis postulave-"rit." So that, according to this judicious writer, (who has confessedly searched much deeper into the formation of vocal sounds in general, and the pronunciation of the English language in particular, than any of our other grammarians) I might have assumed as certain the point which I have been labouring in the text (by arguments drawn from reason and analogy) to render probable.——There is much more to this purpose in Wallis, *loc. cit.* which I should transcribe, if I did not suppose that his book is in the hands of every one who is likely to be curious upon this subject. I will only take notice of one passage which may be wrested to his disadvantage. From considering the gradual extinction of the *e* feminine in our language, and observing that the French, with whom he conversed, very often suppressed it in their common speech, he has been led to predict that the pronunciation of it would *perhaps shortly* be disused among them as among ourselves. The prediction has certainly failed, but notwithstanding I will venture to say that at the time when it was made it was not unworthy of Wallis' sagacity. Unluckily for its success a number of eminent writers happened at that very time to be growing up in France,

either at the end or in the middle of words (72), was anciently pronounced, but obſcurely, like the *e* feminine of the French.

§ 17. The third kind of irregularity to which an Engliſh verſe is liable is from the accents being miſplaced. The reſtoring of Chaucer's words to their juſt number of ſyllables, by the methods which have

whoſe works having ſince been received as ſtandards of ſtyle muſt probably fix for many centuries the ancient uſage of the *e* feminine in poetry, and of courſe give a conſiderable check to the natural progreſs of the language. If the age of Edward III. had been as favourable to letters as that of Louis XIV.; if Chaucer and his contemporary poets had acquired the ſame authority here that Corneille, Moliere, Racine, and Boileau, have obtained in France; if their works had been publiſhed by themſelves and perpetuated in a genuine ſtate by printing, I think it probable that the *e* feminine would ſtill have preſerved its place in our poetical language at leaſt, and certainly without any prejudice to the ſmoothneſs of our verſification.

(72) The reaſoning in the text concerning the final *e* is equally applicable to the ſame vowel in the middle of words. Indeed (as Wallis has obſerved, *loc. cit.*) "vix uſpiam in medio dictionis reperitur *e* mutum, quod non ab origine fuerit "finale." If therefore it was pronounced while final, it would probably continue to be pronounced notwithſtanding the addition of a ſyllable: if it was pronounced in *ſwete*, *trewe*, *large*, *riche*, it would be pronounced in *ſwetely*, *trewely*, *largely*, *richely*. [See v. 123 and 3219, v. 775 and 3692, v. 2740 and 3034, v. 1014 and 1913.] In another very numerous ſet of words (French verbals ending in *ment*) the pronunciation of this middle *e* is countenanced not only by analogy, but alſo by the ſtill ſubſiſting practice in the French language: ſo Chaucer certainly pronounced the words *jugement*, ver. 780, 807, 820, *commandement*, ver. 2871, 2981, *amendement*, ver. 4183, *pavement*, *aviſement*, ver. 4505, 4506. Even Spenſer in the ſame canto (the 8th of B. v.) uſes *atonement* and *avengement* as words of four ſyllables, [ſt. 21. 8—30. 5.] and Wallis takes notice that the middle *e* in *commandement* was pronounced in his time.

been pointed out above, will often be of signal service in restoring his accents also to their proper places; but further, in many words we must be cautious of concluding too hastily that Chaucer accented the same syllables that we do; on the contrary, I am persuaded that in his French words he most commonly laid his accent according to the French custom, (upon the *last* syllable, or the *last but one*, in words ending in *e* feminine) which, as is well known, is the very reverse of our practice. Thus in ver. 3, he uses *licoúr* for *líquour*; ver. 11, *coráges* for *córages*; ver. 22, again *coráge* for *córage*; ver. 37, *resón* for *réson*; ver. 77, *viáge* for *vóyage*; ver. 109, 10, *viságe*, *uságe*, for *vísage úsage*; ver. 140, *manére* for *mánner*; ver. 186, *laboúre* for *lábour*; ver. 204, *prelát* for *prélate*; ver. 211, *langáge* for *lánguage*; ver. 212, *mariáge* for *márriage*; ver. 216, *contrée* for *coúntry*; and so through the whole work.

In the same manner he accents the last syllable of the participle present, as ver. 885, 6, *wedding*, *coming*, for *wédding*, *cóming*; ver. 903, *living* for *líving*; ver. 907, 8, *coming*, *crying*, for *cóming*, *crying*; ver. 998, *brenníng* for *brénning*, &c.: and as he does this in words of Saxon as well as of French growth, I should suppose that the old participle of the present tense ending in *and* was originally accented upon that syllable, as it certainly continued to be by the Scottish poets a long time after Chaucer. See *Bp. Douglas*, *Virg.* p. 18, ver. 18, *spryngánd*; ver. 51, *beránd*; p. 27, ver. 49, *fleánd*; p. 29, ver. 10, *feánd*.

These instances are all taken from the rhyming syllables (where a strong accent is indispensably necessary) in order to prove beyond contradiction that Chaucer frequently accented his words in the French manner. But if he followed this practice at the end of his verses, it is more than probable that he did

the ſame in the middle, whenever it gave a more harmonious flow to his metre; and therefore in ver. 4, inſtead of *vértue*, I ſuppoſe he pronounced *vertúe*; in ver 11, inſtead of *náture*, *natúre*; in ver. 25, inſtead of *avénture*, *aventúre*; in ver. 46, inſtead of *bónour*, *bonoúr*, &c.

It may be proper however to obſerve, that we are not to expect from Chaucer that regularity in the diſpoſition of his accents which the practice of our greateſt poets in the laſt and the preſent century has taught us to conſider as eſſential to harmonious (73) verſification: none of his maſters, either French or Italian, had ſet him a pattern of exactneſs (74) in this reſpect; and it is rather ſurpriſing that, without rule or example to guide him, he has ſo ſeldom failed to place his accents in ſuch a manner as to produce the cadence beſt ſuited to the nature of his verſe.

(73) It is agreed, I believe, that in our heroick metre thoſe verſes (conſidered ſingly) are the moſt harmonious in which the accents fall upon the even ſyllables; but it has never (that I know) been defined how far a verſe may vary from this its moſt perfect form and yet remain a verſe. On the *tenth* (or rhyming) ſyllable a ſtrong accent is in all caſes indiſpenſably required, and in order to make the line tolerably harmonious, it ſeems neceſſary that at leaſt *two more* of the *even* ſyllables ſhould be accented, the *fourth* being (almoſt always) one of them. Milton, however, has not ſubjected his verſe even to theſe rules; particularly (either by negligence or deſign) he has frequently put an unaccented ſyllable in the *fourth* place. See *P. L.* b. iii. 36, 586, b. v. 413, 750, 874.

(74) It has been ſuggeſted above that Chaucer probably copied his heroick metre from Boccace; but neither Boccace nor any of the older Italian poets are exact in the diſpoſition of their accents. Though their hendecaſyllable metre is allowed by the beſt criticks to be derived from the trimeter iambick catalectick, the perfection of it has never been determined (like that of our heroick metre) to conſiſt in the conformity of its

§ 18. I ſhall conclude this long and (I fear) tedious Eſſay with a grammatical and metrical analyſis of the firſt eighteen lines of The Canterbury Tales. This will afford me an opportunity of illuſtrating at once a conſiderable part of that theory which I have ventured to propoſe in the preceding pages with regard to the Language and Verſification of Chaucer: the remainder I ſhall take occaſion to explain in a few Notes upon particular paſſages.

THE BEGINNING OF THE CANTERBURY TALES.

I. *Whánne* 1 that April with his *ſhoúres* 2 *ſóte* 3
II. The droughte of March hath *pérced* 1 tó the *róte*,
III. And *báthed* 1 every veine in *ſwíche* 2 *licoúr* 3,
IV. Of whiche *vertúe* 1 engéndred is the flour;

accents to the pure iambick meaſure. [*Quadrio*, *L.* ii. *Diſ.* iii. c. iv. *part* i.] Nor does the King of Navarre always diſpoſe his accents more agreeably to our preſent notions. It is probable, I think, that ſome fundamental differences in the three languages may have led each of the three nations to prefer a different form of conſtructing the ſame kind of verſe.

I. 1. *Whanne*, *Sax.* Hƿænne, is ſo ſeldom uſed as a diſſyllable by Chaucer, that for ſome time I had great doubts about the true reading of this line: I now believe that it is right as here printed, and that the ſame word is to be pronounced as a diſſyllable in ver. 703.

But with theſe relikes *whanne* that he fond—

Thanne, a word of the ſame form, occurs more frequently as a diſſyllable. See ver. 12260, 12506, 12721, 13924, 15282. —2. *Shoures*, diſ. plural number. See above, p. 94.—3. *Sote*. See ver. V.

II. 1. *Perced*, diſ. participle of the paſt time. See above, p. 159—2. *Rote*, root.

III. 1. *Bathed*, diſ. See II. 1.—2. *Swiche*, ſuch, from *ſwilke*, *Sax.*—3. *licoúr*, *Fr.* has the accent upon the laſt ſyllable, after the French mode.

IV. 1. *Vertúe*, *Fr.* may be accented in the ſame manner.

V. Whan Zéphirús eke wíth his *sóte* 1 bréthe
VI. *Enspíred* 1 háth in évery hólt and héthe
VII. The téndre *cróppes* 1, and the *yónge* 2 sónne
VIII. Háth in the Rám his *bálfe* 1 coúrs *yrónne* 2,
IX. And *smále* 1 *foúles* 2 *máken* 3 mélodíe,
X. That *slépen* 1 *álle* 2 night with ópen eye,
XI. So príketh *hém* 1 *Natúre* 2 in *hír* 3 *corágez* 4,

There is another way of preserving the harmony of this verse, by making *whiche* (from *whilke*, *Sax.*) a dissyllable. See ver. 1014, 3921, 5488, 6537. *Vertue* may then be pronounced, as it is now, with the accent on the first, the second syllable being incorporated with the first of *engendred*.

V. 1. *Sote*, *swote*, *swete*, sweet, dis. See ver. 3219, 3699, 3724, 3765, 3790.

VI. 1. *Enspired*, tris. part. of past time.

VII. 1. *Croppes*, dis. pl. n. as *shoures*. I. 2.—2. *Yonge*, dis. See ver. 213, 666, 1013, 3233, 73. It is used as a dissyllable in the Ormulum, col. 230;

That wás god bisne fūl i wís till ure *yūnge* génge.

Stronge and *longe* are pronounced in the same manner. See ver. 2375, 2640, 6, 3069, 3438, 3682.

VIII. 1. *Halfe* or *halve*, dis. The original word is *halfen*. So *selve*, from *selfen*, is a dissyllable, ver. 2862, 4535.—2. *Yronne*, run, part. of the past time, with the Saxon prepositive particle ȝe, which in the mss. of Chaucer is universally expressed by *y* or *i*. In this edition, for the sake of perspecuity, *y* only is used.

IX. 1. *Smale*, dis. See ver. 146, 2078, 6897, 10207.——— 2. *Foules*, dis. as *shoures*, I. 2.—3. *Maken*, make, plural number of the present tense. See above, p. 119.

X. I. 1. *Slepen*, as *maken*, IX. 3.—2, *Alle*, dis. See ver. 76, 348, 536, 1854, 2102.

XI. 1. *Hem*, them. It is constantly used so by Chaucer. 2. *Nature* should perhaps be accented on the last syllable (or rather the last but one, supposing it a trisyllable) after the French manner, though in the present case the verse will be sufficiently harmonious if it be accented on the first. That Chaucer did

XII. Than *lóngen* 1 fólk to *gón* 2 on pilgrimáges,
XIII. And *pálmeres* 1 for to *ſéken* 2 *ſtránge* 3 ſtróndes,
XIV. To *ſérve* 1 *hálwes* 2 *cóuthe* 3 in ſóndry lóndes;

often accent it after the French manner appears from ver. 8778, 9842, 11657, 11945, 12229. In the ſame manner he accents *figúre*, ver 2037, 2045.; *meſúre*, ver. 8132, 8498.; *aſúre*, *ſtatúre*, ver. 8130, 3.; *peintúre*, ver. 11967.; *aventúre*, ver. 1188, 1237.; *creatúre*, ver. 2397, 4854.; and many other words of the ſame form, derived from the French language. ———3. *Hir*, *their*, the poſſeſſive pronoun of the third perſon plural, is variouſly written, *hir*, *hire*, *her*, and *here*, not only in different mſſ. but even in the ſame page of good mſſ. There ſeems to be no reaſon for perpetuating varieties of this kind, which can only have taken their riſe from the unſettled ſtate of our orthography before the invention of printing, and which now contribute more than any real alteration of the language to obſcure the ſenſe of our old authors. In this edition therefore *hir* is conſtantly put to ſignify *their*, and *hire* to ſignify *her*, whether it be the oblique caſe of the perſonal pronoun *ſhe* or the poſſeſſive of the ſame pronoun.——4. *Coráges*, *Fr.* is to be accented on the *penultima*. See before, p. 165, and alſo ver. 1947, 2215. To the other inſtances quoted in p. 165 add *avantáge*, ver. 2442, 4766.; *brocáge*, 3375.; *ſeráge*, ver. 3166.; *lináge*, ver. 4270, 5419.; *ſerváge*, ver. 1948, 4788.; *coſtáge* ver. 5831.; *paráge*, ver. 5832.

XII. 1. *Longen*, as *maken*, IX. 3.---2. *Gon*, infinitive mode of *go*, terminated in *n*, according to the Saxon form. See above, p. 119.

XIII. 1. *Palmeres*, diſ. the *e* of the termination being cut out by ſyncope, as it generally is in plural nouns of three ſyllables, accented upon the firſt, and in the paſt tenſes and their participles of verbs, of the ſame deſcription, ending in *ed*. The reaſon ſeems to be, that where the accent is placed ſo early we cannot pronounce the final ſyllables fully without laying more ſtreſs upon them than they can properly bear.----2. *Seken*, as *gon*, XII. 2.---3. *Strange*, diſ. *Fr.* See before, p. 161.

XIV. 1. *Serve*, diſ. from *ſerven*, the *n* being thrown away before *h*. See above, p. 119 and 162.--2. *Halwes*, *Sax.* halȝeſ.

XV. And spécially from évery *shires* 1 énde
XVI. Of *Englelónd* 1 to Cánterbúry *they wénde* 2,
XVII. The hóly blissful mártyr fór to séke
XVIII. That *hém* 1 hath *hólpen* 2 whán that théy were *séke* 3.

The Saxon ȝ is changed into *w*, as in *forwe*, *morwe*, and some others, though it generally passes into *y*. The derivatives from this same word afford us instances of both forms; *holyness*, *holyday*, all *hallows*-day.---3. *Couthe*, known, the participle of the past time from *connen*, to know. See before, n. 35.

XV. 1. *Shires*, dis. genitive case sing. See before, p. 159.

XVI. 1. *Englelond*, trisyllable, from the Saxon Englalanda.
——2. The last foot consists of three syllables;

——to Cán | terbúr | y they wénde.

See above, n. 66.

XVIII. *Hem*, them. See XI. 1. 2. *Holpen*, the participle of the past time from the irregular verb *help*. See before, n. 34. ---3. *Seke*, sick. As Chaucer usually writes this word *sike*, we may suppose that in this instance he has altered the orthography in order to make the rhyme more exact, a liberty with which he sometimes indulges himself, though much more sparingly than his contemporary poets. The Saxon writers afford authorities to justify either method of spelling, as they use both Seoca and Sioca.——I have hitherto considered these verses as consisting of *ten* syllables only; but it is impossible not to observe that, according to the rules of pronunciation established above, all of them, except the third and fourth, consist really of *eleven* syllables. This is evident at first sight in ver. 13, 14, 15, 16, and might be shewn as clearly by authority or analogy in the others; but as the *eleventh* syllable, in our Versification, being unaccented, may always, I apprehend, be absent or present without prejudice to the metre, there does not seem to be any necessity for pointing it out in every particular instance.

AN INTRODUCTORY DISCOURSE

TO THE CANTERBURY TALES.

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† Mr. Tyrrwhitt here speeks of his own edition—this contains the whole omitted Tales, *viz.* The Plowman's Tale, Tale of Gamelyn, Adventure of Pardoner and Tapester, and The Marchant's Second Tale. See vol. VI.

§ 1 THE dramatick form which Boccace gave to his collection of tales or novels about the middle of the 14th century (1) must be allowed to have been a ca-

(1) The action of The Decameron being supposed in 1348, the year of the great pestilence, it is probable that Boccace did not set about his work till after that period. How soon he completed it is uncertain. It should seem from the introduction to the fourth day that a part (containing perhaps the three first days) was published separately, for in that introduction he takes pains to answer the censures which had been passed upon him by several persons who had read his novels. One of the censures is, "that it did not become *his age* to write for the "amusement of women," &c. In his answer he seems to allow the fact that he was rather an old fellow, but endeavours to justify himself by the examples of Guido Cavalcanti et

pital improvement of that fpecies of amufing compofition. The Decameron in that refpect (not to mention many others) has the fame advantage over the *Cento Novelle Antiche*, which are fuppofed to have preceded it in point of time, that a regular comedy will neceffarily have over an equal number of fingle unconnected fcenes. Perhaps indeed there would be no great harm if the criticks would permit us to confider The Decameron, and other compofitions of that kind, in the light of comedies not intended for the ftage; at leaft we may venture to affume that the clofer any fuch compofition fhall copy the moft effential forms of comedy, the more natural and defined the plan fhall be, the more the characters fhall be diverfified, the more the tale fhall be fuited to the characters, fo much the more confpicuous will be the fkill of the writer, and his work approach the nearer to perfection.

§ 2. The Canterbury Tales are a work of the fame nature with The Decameron, and were in all probability compofed in imitation of it, though upon a dif-

Dante Alighieri *gia vechi* et Meffer Cino da Piftoria *vecchiffimo*. It appears from a paffage in the *Laberinto d'Amore* [ed. 1723, t. iii. page 24,] that Boccace confidered himfelf as an elderly man when he was a little turned of forty, and therefore the publication of the firft part of The Decameron may very well have been, as Salviati has fixed it, [V. *Manni Ift. del Decam.* p. 144,] in 1353, when Boccace was juft forty years of age. If we confider the nature of the work, and that the author in his conclufion calls it repeatedly *lunga fatica*, and fays that *molto tempo* had paffed between the commencement and completion of it, we can hardly, I think, fuppofe that it was finifhed in lefs than ten years, which will bring the publication of the entire collection of novels (as we now have it) down to 1358.

ferent and (in my opinion) an improved plan. It would be easy to shew that in the several points abovementioned Chaucer has either been more judicious or more fortunate than his master Boccace; but (waving for the present (2) that disquisition) I shall proceed to the immediate object of this Discourse, which is, in the first place, to lay before the reader the general plan of The Canterbury Tales, as it appears to have been originally designed by Chaucer, and, secondly, to give a particular review of the several parts of that Work which are come down to us as they are published in this edition.

§ 3. The general plan of The Canterbury Tales may be learned in a great measure from the Prologue which Chaucer himself has prefixed to them. He sup-

(2) I will only just mention what appear to me to be fundamental defects in The Decameron. In the first place, the *action* is indefinite, not limited by its own nature, but merely by the will of the author. It might, if he had been so pleased, have as well comprehended twenty or a hundred days as ten, and therefore though some frivolous reasons are assigned for the return of the company to Florence, we see too plainly that the true reason was that the budget of novels was exhausted; not to mention that every day after the first may properly be considered as containing a new action, or, what is worse, a repetition of the action of the former day. The second defect is the *characters*, which are so nearly resembling to each other in age, rank, and even natural disposition, that if they had been strictly supported their conversation must have been incapable of that variety which is necessary to carry the reader through so long a work. The third defect has arisen from the author's attempt to remedy the second. In order to diversify and enliven his narrations he has made a circle of virtuous ladies and polite gentlemen hear and relate in their turns a number of stories which cannot with any degree of probability be supposed to have been suffered in such an assembly.

poses there that a company of pilgrims going to Canterbury assemble at an inn in Southwark, and agree that for their common amusement on the road each of them shall tell at least one Tale in going to Canbury, and another in coming back from thence, and that he who shall tell the best Tales shall be treated by the rest with a supper upon their return to the same inn. This is shortly the fable. The characters of the pilgrims are as various as at that time could be found in the several departments of middle life; that is, in fact, as various as could with any probability be brought together so as to form one company, the highest and the lowest ranks of society being necessarily excluded. It appears further that the design of Chaucer was not barely to recite the Tales told by the pilgrims, but also to describe their journey, *And all the remenant of their pilgrimage*, v. 726, including, probably, their adventures at Canterbury as well as upon the road. If we add that the Tales, besides being nicely adapted to the characters of their respective relators, were intended to be connected together by suitable introductions, and interspersed with diverting episodes, and that the greatest part of them was to have been executed in verse, we shall have a tolerable idea of the extent and difficulty of the whole undertaking; and admiring, as we must, the vigour of that genius which in an advanced age (3) could begin so vast a work, we shall rather

(3) Chaucer was born in 1328, and it is most probable, I think, that he did not begin his Canterbury Tales before 1382 at the earliest. My reason is this. The queen, who is mentioned in The Legende of Good Women, *v.* 496, was certainly Anne of Bohemia, the first queen of Rich. II.; she was not married to Richard till the beginning of 1382, so that The Legende cannot possibly be supposed of an earlier date than that year. In The Legende [*ver.* 329—332, *ver.* 417—430,] Chaucer

lament than be furprifed that it has been left imperfect.

§ 4. In truth, if we compare thofe parts of The Canterbury Tales of which we are in poffeffion with the fketch which has been juft given of the intended whole, it will be found that more than one half is wanting. The Prologue we have perhaps nearly complete, and the greateft part of the journey to Canterbury, but not a word of the tranfactions at Canterbury, or of the journey homeward, or of the Epilogue which we may fuppofe was to have concluded the work, with an account of the prize-fupper and the feparation of the company. Even in that part which we have of the journey to Canterbury it will be neceffary, in the following review, to take notice of certain defects and inconfiftencies which can only be accounted for upon the fuppofition that the work was never finifhed by the Author.

§ 5. Having thus ftated the general plan of The Canterbury Tales, I fhall now, according to my promife, enter upon a particular review of thofe parts of them which are publifhed in this edition, beginning with *The Prologue.*

It feems to have been the intention of Chaucer, in

has enumerated, I believe, all the confiderable works which he had then compofed. It was to his purpofe not to omit any. He not only does not mention The Canterbury Tales, but he exprefsly names the ftory of Palamon and Arcite, and the Life of Saint Cecilia, both which now make part of them, as feparate compofitions. I am perfuaded therefore that in 1382 the work of The Canterbury Tales was not begun; and if we look further, and confider the troubles in which Chaucer was involved for the five or fix following years by his connections with John of Northampton, we can hardly fuppofe that it was much advanced before 1389, the fixty-firft year of the Author's age.

the first lines of the Prologue, to mark with some exactness the *time* of his supposed pilgrimage, but unluckily the two circumstances of his description which were most likely to answer that purpose are each of them irreconcileable to the other. When he tells us that *the shoures of April had persed to the rote the droughte of March*, ver. 1, 2, we must suppose (in order to allow due time for such an operation) that April was far advanced, while on the other hand the place of the sun, *having just run half his course in the Ram*, ver. 7, 8, restrains us to some day in the very latter end of March, as the vernal equinox in the age of Chaucer, according to his own treatise on the Astrolabe (4), was computed to happen on the 12th of March. This difficulty may (and I think should) be removed by reading in ver. 8, *the Bull*, instead of *the Ram* (5). All the parts of the description will then be consistent with themselves, and with another passage, [ver. 4425,] where, in the best mss. *the eighte and twenty day* of April is named as the day of the journey to Canterbury.

We will suppose therefore that the preceding day,

(4) In this particular the editions agree with the mss. but in general the printed text of this treatise is so monstrously incorrect that it cannot be cited with any safety.

(5) This correction may seem to be authorized in some measure by Lydgate, who begins his Continuation of The Canterbury Tales in this manner;

> Whan bright Phebus *passed was the Ram*
> Middle of Aprill, and into the Bull came.

But the truth is that Dan John wrote for the most part in a great hurry, and consequently without much accuracy. In the account which he proceeds to give of Chaucer's Tales he not only confounds the circumstances of description of the Sompnour and Pardoner, but he speaks of the latter as----

> Telling a tale to anger with the Frere.
> *Storie of Thebes*, ver. 32—35.

the seven-and-twentieth of April, was the day on which the company assembled at The Tabard. In what year this happened Chaucer has not thought fit to inform us (6): either he did not think it necessary to fix that

(6) It is clear that whether the pilgrimage were real or imaginary Chaucer as a poet had a right to suppose it to have happened at the time which he thought best; he was only to take care, when the time was once fixed, that no circumstances were admitted into his poem which might clash or be inconsistent with the date of it. When no particular date is assigned to a fable of this sort we must naturally imagine that the date of the fable coincides with that of the composition, and accordingly if we examine The Cant. Tales, we shall not find any circumstances which do not perfectly suit with that period which has been stated in a former note (No 3,) as the probable time of Chaucer's beginning to compose them. The latest historical fact mentioned in them is the insurrection of Jakke Straw [*ver.* 15400,] which happened in 1381, and the earliest in which any person of the drama is concerned is the siege of Algezir, [*ver.* 56, 57,] which began in August 1342, and ended with the taking of the city in March 1344: [*Mariana*, l. xvi. c. 10, 11,] the Knight therefore might very well be supposed to have been at that siege, and also upon a pilgrimage to Canterbury in 1383, or thereabouts.----They who are disposed to believe the pilgrimage to have been real, and to have happened in 1383, may support their opinion by the following inscription, which is still to be read upon the inn now called The Talbot in Southwark; "This is the inn where Sir Jeffrey "Chaucer and the twenty-nine Pilgrims lodged in their jour-"ney to Canterbury, *anno* 1383." Though the present inscription is evidently of a very recent date, we might suppose it to have been propagated to us by a succession of faithful transcripts from the very time, but unluckily there is too good reason to be assured that the first inscription of this sort was not earlier than the last century. Mr. Speght, who appears to have been inquisitive concerning this inn in 1597, has left us this account of it in his Glossary, v. *Tabard*; "A jaquet or "sleveless coate, worne in times past by noblemen in the

point at all, or perhaps he poſtponed it till the completion of his work ſhould enable him to aſſign ſuch a date to his fable as ſhould be conſiſtent with all the hiſtorical circumſtances which he might take occaſion to introduce into it.

§ 6. A ſecond point intended to be defined in the Prologue is the number of the company; and this too has its difficulties. They are ſaid, in ver. 24, to have been *nine-and-twenty*, but it is not clear whether Chau-

"warres, but now onely by heraults, and is called theyre "coate of armes in ſervife; it is the ſigne of an inne in South-"warke by London, within the which was the lodging of the "Abbot of Hyde by Wincheſter. This was the hoſtelry where "Chaucer and the other pilgrims mett together, and with "Henry Baily their hoſte accorded about the manner of their "journey to Canterbury. And whereas thro' time it hath bin "much decaied, it is now by maſter J. Preſton, with the Abbot's "houſe thereto adjoyned, newly repaired, and with convenient "roomes much encreaſed for the receipt of many gueſts."—If any inſcription of this kind had then been there he would hardly have omitted to mention it, and therefore I am perſuaded it has been put up ſince his time, and moſt probably when the ſign was changed from The Tabard to The Talbot, in order to preſerve the ancient glory of the houſe notwithſtanding its new title. Whoever furniſhed the date muſt be allowed to have at leaſt invented plauſibly.--While I am upon the ſubject of this famous Hoſtelry I will juſt add, that it was probably parcel of two tenements which appear to have been conveyed by William de Ludegarſale to the Abbot, &c. *de Hydâ juxta Winton*, in 1306, and which are deſcribed (in a former conveyance there recited) to extend in length, "a communi foſ-"ſato de Southwerke verſus Orientem, uſque Regiam viam "de Sowthwerke verſus Occidentem." *Regiſtrum de Hyde*, "*mſ. Harl.* 1761, fol. 166---173. If we ſhould ever be ſo happy as to recover the account-books of the Abbey of Hyde we may poſſibly learn what rent Harry Baily paid for his inn, and many other important particulars.

cer himself is included in that number; they might therefore, according to that passage, be *thirty*; but if we reckon the several characters as they are enumerated in the Prologue we shall find them *one-and-thirty*; 1. a Knight, 2. a Squier, 3. a Yeman, 4. a Prioresse, 5. another Nonne, 6, 7, 8. three Preestes, 9. a Monk, 10. a Frere, 11. a Marchant, 12. a Clerk of Oxenforde, 13. a Sergeant of the Lawe, 14. a Frankelein, 15. an Haberdasher, 16. a Carpenter, 17. a Webbe, 18. a Deyer, 19. a Tapiser, 20. a Coke, 21. a Shipman, 22. a Doctour of Physike, 23. a Wif of Bathe, 24. a Persone, 25. a Plowman, 26. a Reve, 27. a Miller, 28. a Sompnour, 29. a Pardoner, 30. a Manciple, 31. Chaucer himself. It must be observed however that in this list there is one very suspicious article, which is that of the *three Preestes*. As it appears evidently to have been the design of Chaucer to compose his company of individuals of different ranks, in order to produce a greater variety of distinct characters, we can hardly conceive that he would, in this single instance, introduce *three* of the same profession without any discriminating circumstances whatever; and in fact when the Nonne's Preest is called upon to tell his Tale, (ver. 14814,) he is accosted by the Host in a manner which will not permit us to suppose that two others of the same denomination were present. This must be allowed to be a strong objection to the genuineness of that article of the *three* Preestes; but it is not the only one. All the other characters are particularly described, and most of them very much at large, whereas the whole that is said of the *other Nonne* and the *three Preestes* is contained in these two lines (ver. 163, 4,) at the end of the Prioresse's character;

> Another Nonne also with hire had she,
> That was hire chapellein, and Preestes three.

Where it is alſo obſervable that the ſingle circumſtance of deſcription is falſe, for no nonne could be a chaplain. The chief duty of a chaplain was to ſay maſs and to hear confeſſion, neither of which offices could regularly be performed by a nonne or by any woman (7.)

It ſhould ſeem, therefore, that we have ſufficient ground to reject theſe two lines, or at leaſt the ſecond, as an interpolation (8,) by which means we ſhall get

(7) It appears that ſome abbeſſes did at one time attempt to hear the confeſſions of their nuns, and to exerciſe ſome other ſmaller parts of the clerical function; but this practice, I apprehend, was ſoon ſtopped by Gregory IX. who has forbidden it in the ſtrongeſt terms, *Decretal.* l. v. tit. 38, c. x.; "Nova quædam noſtris ſunt auribus intimata, quod Abbatiſſæ moniales "proprias benedicunt; *ipſarum quoque confeſſiones in criminibus audiunt*, et legentes Evangelium præſumunt publice "prædicare: cum igitur id abſonum ſit et pariter abſurdum, "Mandamus quatenus ne id de cætero fiat cunctis firmiter inhibere." If theſe preſumptuous abbeſſes had ventured to ſay maſs his Holineſs would doubtleſs have thundered ſtill louder againſt them.

(8) My notion (I cannot call it opinion) of the matter is this, that the firſt of theſe lines did really begin the character of the Nonne, which Chaucer had originally inſerted in this place, together with that of the Nonne's Preeſt, at as great length as the other characters, but they were both afterwards expunged either by himſelf, or (more probably) by thoſe who publiſhed his work after his death, for reaſons of nearly the ſame kind with thoſe which occaſioned the ſuppreſſion of the latter part of The Coke's Tale. I ſuſpect our bard had been rather too gay in his deſcription of theſe two religious perſons. See a little concerning the Preeſt, ver. 15453—65.----If it ſhould be thought improbable that an interpolator would inſert any thing ſo abſurd and contradictory to the Author's plan as the ſecond line, I beg leave to ſuggeſt that it is ſtill more improbable that ſuch a line ſhould have come from the Author himſelf; and further,

rid of *two* of the Preestes, and the detail of the characters will agree with the gross number in ver. 24, Chaucer himself being included among the *nine-and-twenty*. As novelists generally delight in even numbers it is not improbable that the Host was intended to be the thirtieth: though not under the same obligation with the other pilgrims, he might nevertheless tell his Tale among them as a volunteer.

§ 7. This leads me, in the third place, to examine what the *agreement* was which the pilgrims entered into at the suggestion of the Host with respect to the number of Tales that each person was to tell. The proposal of the Host stands thus, with very little variation, in all the mss.;

This is the point—[says he, ver. 792—5,]

> That eche of you, to shorten with youre way
> In this viage shall tellen Tales tway,
> To Canterbury ward I mene it so,
> And homeward he shal tellen other two.

From this passage we should certainly conclude that each of them was to tell *two* Tales in the journey to Canterbury, and *two more* in the journey homeward; but all the other passages in which mention is made of this agreement would rather lead us to believe that they were to tell only *one* Tale in each journey, and the Prologue to The Parson's Tale strongly confirms this latter supposition. The Host says there, [ver. 17317,]

> Now lacketh us no Tales mo than on—

and calling upon the Parson to tell this one Tale which was wanting, he says to him, [ver. 17325,]

I think I can promise, in the course of the following Work, to point out several other undoubted interpolations, which are to the full as absurd as the subject of our present discussion.

—ne breke thou not our play,
For every man, ſave thou, hath told his Tale.

The Parſon therefore had not told any Tale before, and only one Tale was expected from him (and conſequently from each of the others) upon that journey.

It is true that a very ſlight alteration of the paſſage firſt cited would reconcile that too to this hypotheſis; if it were written—

That eche of you, to ſhorten with youre way
In this viage ſhal tellen Tales tway,
To Canterbury ward I mene it *o*,
And homeward he ſhal tell another *to*——

the original propoſition of the Hoſt would perfectly agree with what appears to have been the ſubſequent practice. However, I cannot venture to propoſe ſuch an alteration of the text in oppoſition to ſo many mſſ. ſome of them of the beſt note; and therefore the reader, if he is ſo pleaſed, may conſider this as one of thoſe inconſiſtencies hinted at above which prove too plainly that the Author had not finiſhed his Work.

§ 8. The remainder of the Prologue is employed in deſcribing the characters of the pilgrims and their firſt ſetting out upon their journey. The little that it may be neceſſary to ſay in illuſtration of ſome of the characters I ſhall reſerve for the Notes. The circumſtances of their ſetting out are related ſuccinctly and naturally; and the contrivance of appointing the Knight *by lot* to tell the firſt Tale is a happy one, as it affords the Author the opportunity of giving his Work a ſplendid opening, and at the ſame time does not infringe that apparent equality upon which the freedom of diſcourſe, and conſequently the eaſe and good humour of every ſociety, ſo entirely depends. The general ſatisfaction which this appointment is

said to give to the company puts us in mind of a similar gratification to the secret wishes of the Grecian army when the lot of fighting with Hector falls to Ajax, though there is not the least probability that Chaucer had ever read the Iliad even in a translation.

§ 9. *The Knightes Tale*, or at least a poem upon the same subject, was originally composed by Chaucer as a separate work: as such it is mentioned by him, among some of his other works, in The Legende of Gode Women, [ver. 420, 1,] under the title of—*Al the Love of Palamon and Arcite of Thebes, though the Storie is knowen lite*—and the last words seem to imply that it had not made itself very popular. It is not impossible that at first it was a mere translation of The Theseida of Boccace, and that its present form was given to it when Chaucer determined to assign it the first place among his Canterbury Tales. As The Theseida, upon which this Tale is entirely founded, is very rarely to be met with (9,) it may not be unpleasing to the

(9) The letter which Boccace sent to the Fiammetta with this poem is dated *di Napoli a 15 d'Aprile* 1341. [*Lettere di* xiii. *Uomini Illust. Ven.* 1564.] I believe that date is a true one, and it is remarkable as being the very year and month in which Petrarch received the laurel at Rome. The long friendship which subsisted between these two extraordinary men must probably have commenced in the preceding winter, when Petrarch came to Naples in order to be examined by King Robert, previously to his going to Rome. Boccace seems to have been present at some of the conversations between him and the king, [*Geneal. Deor.* l. xiv. c. xxii.]—The first edition of the Theseida, according to Quadrio, [t. vi. p. 462,] was without date, and under the mistaken title of *Amazonide*, which might have been proper enough for the first book; it was soon after however reprinted, with its true title, at Ferrara in 1475, fol. Dr. Askew was so obliging as to lend me the only copy of this edit.

reader to see here a short summary of it, which will shew with what skill Chaucer has proceeded in reducing a poem of about ten thousand lines to a little more than two thousand, without omitting any material circumstance.

The Theseida is distributed into twelve books or cantos.

which I have ever heard of in England. The Rev. Mr. Crofts has a later edit. in 4to, printed at Venice in 1528, but in that the poem has been *riveduto e emendato*, that is, in plain English, modernized. I cannot help suspecting that Salvini, who has inveighed with great bitterness against the corruptions of the printed Theseida, [*Manni. Ist. del Decam.* p. 52.] had only examined this last edition, for I observe that a stanza which he has quoted (from some mf. as I suppose) is not near so correct as it is in the edit. of 1475. As this stanza contains Boccace's own account of the intention of his poem I shall transcribe it here from that edition. It is the beginning of his conclusion;

Poi che le Muse nude cominciaro
Nel conspeto de gli omeni ad andare,
Gia fur de quelli che [gia] le exercitaro
Con bello stilo in *honesto* parlare,
E altri in *amoroso* lo operaro,
Ma tu, o libro, primo al lor cantare
Di *Marte* fai gli affanni sostenuti,
Nel vulgar Latino mai piu non veduti.

This plainly alludes to a passage in Dante, *de Vulgari Eloquentia*, l. ii. c. 2, where, after having pointed out the three great subjects of poetry, *viz. arma, amorem, et rectitudinem*, (war, love, and morality,) and enumerated the illustrious writers upon each, he adds, *arma vero nullum Italum adhuc invenio poetasse.* Boccace therefore apparently prides himself upon having supplied the defect remarked by Dante, and upon being the first who taught the Italian Muses to sing of arms.——Besides other variations for the worse the fifth line in Salvini's copy is written thus;

Ed altri in *dolci modi* l'operaro———

by which means the allusion to Dante is rendered incomplete.

B. I. Contains the war of Thefeus with the Amazons, their fubmiffion to him, and his marriage with Hippolyta.

B. II. Thefeus having fpent two years in Scythia is reproached by Pirithous in a vifion, and immediately returns to Athens with Hippolyta and her fifter Emilia. He enters the city in triumph, finds the Grecian ladies in the temple of Clemenzia, marches to Thebes, kills Creon, &c. and brings home Palemone and Arcita, who are

Damnati---ad eterna prefone.

B. III. Emilia walking in a garden and finging is heard and feen firft by Arcita (10,) who calls Palemone. They are both equally enamoured of her, but without any jealoufy or rivalfhip. Emilia is fuppofed to fee them at the window, and to be not difpleafed with their admiration.—Arcita is releafed at the requeft of Pirithous, takes his leave of Palemone with embraces, &c.

B. IV. Arcita, having changed his name to Pentheo, goes into the fervice of Menelaus at Mycenæ, and afterwards of Peleus at Ægina; from thence he

(10) In defcribing the commencement of this amour, which is to be the fubject of the remainder of the poem, Chaucer has entirely departed from his author in three principal circumftances, and I think in each with very good reafon. 1. By fuppofing Emilia to be feen firft by Palamon he gives him an advantage over his rival which makes the cataftrophe more confonant to poetical juftice. 2. The picture which Boccace has exhibited of two young princes violently enamoured of the fame object without jealoufy or rivalfhip, if not abfolutely unnatural, is certainly very infipid and unpoetical. 3. As no confequence is to follow from their being feen by Emilia at this time it is better, I think, to fuppofe, as Chaucer has done, that they are not feen by her.

returns to Athens, and becomes a favourite servant of Theseus, being known to Emilia though to nobody else, till after some time he is overheard making his complaint in a wood, to which he usually resorted for that purpose, by Pamphilo, a servant of Palemone.

B. V. Upon the report of Pamphilo Palemone *begins* to be jealous of Arcita, and is desirous to get out of prison in order to fight with him. This he accomplishes with the assistance of Pamphilo, by changing clothes with Alimeto a physician. He goes armed to the wood in quest of Arcita, whom he finds sleeping. At first they are very civil and friendly to each other (11;) then Palemone calls upon Arcita to renounce his pretensions to Emilia, or to fight with him. After many long expostulations on the part of Arcita they fight, and are discovered first by Emilia, who sends for Theseus. When he finds who they are, and the cause of their difference, he forgives them, and proposes the method of deciding their claim to Emilia by a combat of an hundred on each side, to which they gladly agree.

B. VI. Palemone and Arcita live splendidly at Athens, and send out messengers to summon their friends, who arrive, and the principal of them are severally described, *viz.* Lycurgus, Peleus, Phocus, Telamon, &c. Agamemnon, Menelaus, Castor and Pollux, &c. Nestor, Evander, Pirithous, Ulysses, Diomedes, Pygmalion, Minos, &c. with a great display of ancient history and mythology.

(11) En sieme se fer festa di bon core,
E li loro accidenti si narraro. *Thes.* L. v.

This is surely too much in the style of romance; Chaucer has made them converse more naturally; he has also judiciously avoided to copy Boccace in representing Arcita as more moderate than his rival.

B. VII. Thefeus declares the laws of the combat, and the two parties of an hundred on each fide are formed. The day before the combat Arcita, after having vifited the temples of all the gods, makes a formal prayer to Mars. The prayer being perfonified (12) is faid to go and find Mars in his temple

(12) Era alor forfi Marte in exercitio
Di chiara far la parte ruginofa
Del grande fuo e horribile hofpitio,
Quando de Arcita *la oration* pietofa
Pervenne li per fare il dato offitio,
Tutta ne lo afpecto lagrimofa;
La qual divene di fpavento muta,
Come di Marte hebbe laca veduta. *Thef.* l. vii.

As this contrivance of perfonifying the prayers, and fending them to the feveral deities, is only in order to introduce a defcription of the refpective temples, it will be allowed, I believe, that Chaucer has attained the fame end by a more natural fiction. It is very probable that Boccace caught the idea of making the prayers perfons from Homer, with whofe works he was better acquainted than moft of his contemporaries in this part of the world; and there can be no doubt, I fuppofe, that Chaucer's imagination, in the expedient which he has fubftituted, was affifted by the occafional edifices which he had himfelf feen erected for the decoration of tournaments.——The combat which follows having no foundation in ancient hiftory or manners, it is no wonder that both poets fhould have admitted a number of incongruous circumftances into their defcription of it. The great advantage which Chaucer has over his original in this refpect is, that he is much fhorter. When we have read in The Thefeida a long and learned catalogue of all the heroes of antiquity brought together upon this occafion, we are only the more furprifed to fee Thefeus, in fuch an affembly, conferring the honour of knighthood upon the two Theban chieftains;

E fenza ftare con non piccolo honore
Cinfe le fpade a li dui fcudieri,
E ad Arcita Polluce e Caftore
Calciaro d'oro li fproni e volontieri,

in Thrace, which is described, and Mars, upon understanding the message, causes favourable signs to be given to Arcita. In the same manner Palemone closes his religious observances with a prayer to Venus. His prayer being also personified, sets out for the temple of Venus on Mount Citherone, which is also described, and the petition is granted. Then the sacrifice of Emilia to Diana is described; her prayer; the appearance of the goddess, and the signs of the two fires.—In the morning they proceed to the theatre with their respective troops, and prepare for the action. Arcita puts up a private prayer to Emilia, and harangues his troop publickly, and Palemone does the same.

B. VIII. Contains a description of the battle, in which Palemone is taken prisoner.

B. IX. The horse of Arcita, being frighted by a Fury sent from hell at the desire of Venus, throws him; however he is carried to Athens in a triumphal chariot with Emilia by his side, is put to bed dangerously ill, and there by his own desire espouses Emilia.

B. X. The funeral of the persons killed in the combat. Arcita being given over by his physicians makes his will in discourse with Theseus, and desires that Palemone may inherit all his possessions, and also Emilia: he then takes leave of Palemone and Emilia, to whom he repeats the same request. Their lamentations. Arcita orders a sacrifice to Mercury, (which Palemone performs for him) and dies.

B. XI. Opens with the passage of Arcita's soul to heaven, imitated from the beginning of the 9th book of Lucan. The funeral of Arcita. Description of the

E Diomede e Ulixe di cuore
Calzati a Palemone, e cavalieri
Ambedui furono alora novelli
Li inamorati Theban damigieli. *Thes.* l. vii.

wood felled takes up ſix ſtanzas. Palemone builds a temple in honour of him, in which his whole hiſtory is painted. The deſcription of this painting is an abridgment of the preceding part of the poem.

B. XII. Theſeus propoſes to carry into execution Arcita's will by the marriage of Palemone and Emilia: this they both decline for ſome time in formal ſpeeches, but at laſt are perſuaded and married. The kings, &c. take their leave, and Palemone remains—*in gioia e in diporto Con la ſua dona nobile e corteſe.*

From this ſketch of the Theſeida it is evident enough that Chaucer was obliged to Boccace (13) for the plan

(13) To whom Boccace was obliged is a more difficult ſubject of inquiry. That the ſtory was of his own invention I think is ſcarce credible. He ſpeaks of it himſelf as *very ancient*, [*Lett. all Fiammetta. Biblioth. Smith. App.* p. 141;] "Trovata "una antichiſſima Storia, e al più delle genti non manifeſta, "in Latino volgare, acciocchè più dilettaſſe e maſſimamente a "voi, che già con ſommo titolo le mie rime eſaltaſte, ho ri-"dotta." He then tells her that ſhe will obſerve that what is related under the name of *one* of the two lovers and of Emilia is very ſimilar to what had actually paſſed between herſelf and him; and adds—"Se forſe alcune coſe ſoperchie vi foſſono, il "voler bene coprire ciò che non era oneſto manifeſtare, da "noi due in fuori, e'l volere la ſtoria ſeguire, ne ſono cagione." I am well aware, however, that declarations of this kind, prefixed to fabulous works, are not much to be depended upon. The wildeſt of the French romances are commonly ſaid by the authors to be tranſlated from ſome old Latin chronicle at St. Denys: and certainly the ſtory of Palemone and Arcita, as related by Boccace, could not be *very ancient*. If it was of Greek original (as I rather ſuſpect) it muſt have been thrown into its preſent form after the Norman princes had introduced the manners of chivalry into their dominions in Sicily and Italy.—— The poem in modern Greek political verſes, *De nuptiis Theſei et Emiliæ*, printed at Venice in 1529, is a mere tranſlation of The Theſeida. The author has even tranſlated the prefatory epiſtle addreſſed by Boccace to The Fiammetta.

and principal incidents of The Knighte's Tale; and in the Notes upon that Tale I ſhall point out ſome paſſages, out of many more, which are literal tranſlations from the Italian.

§ 10. When the Knight has finiſhed his Tale the Hoſt with great propriety calls upon the *Monk*, as the next in rank among the men, to tell the next Tale; but as it ſeems to have been the intention of Chaucer to avail himſelf of the variety of his characters, in order to diſtribute alternate ſucceſſions of ſerious and comick in nearly equal proportions throughout his Work, he has contrived that the Hoſte's arrangement ſhall be ſet aſide by the intruſion of the dronken Miller, whoſe Tale is ſuch as might be expected from his character and condition, a complete contraſt to the Knightes.

§ 11. I have not been able to diſcover from whence the ſtory of *The Miller's Tale* is taken, ſo that for the preſent I muſt give Chaucer credit for it as his own invention, though in general he appears to have built his Tales, both ſerious and comick, upon ſtories which he found ready made. The great difference is, that in his ſerious pieces he often follows his author with the ſervility of a mere tranſlator, and in conſequence his narration is jejune and conſtrained; whereas in the comick he is generally ſatisfied with borrowing a ſlight hint of his ſubject, which he varies, enlarges, and embelliſhes, at pleaſure, and gives the whole the air and colour of an original; a ſure ſign that his genius rather led him to compoſitions of the latter kind.

§ 12. The next Tale is told by the *Reve* (who is repreſented above [ver. 589,] as a cholerick man) in revenge of The Miller's Tale. It has been generally ſaid to be borrowed from The Decameron, d. ix. n. 6, but I rather think that both Boccace and Chaucer, in this inſtance, have taken whatever they have in com-

mon from an old *fabliau* or *conte* of an anonymous French rhymer, *De Gombert et des deux Clers*. The reader may eaſily ſatisfy himſelf upon this head by caſting his eye upon the French *Fabliau*, which has lately been printed with ſeveral others from mſſ. in France. See *Fabliaux et Contes*, *Paris*, 1756, t. ii. p. 115—124.

§ 13. *The Coke's Tale* is imperfect in all the mſſ. which I have had an opportunity of examining. In mſ. *A.* it ſeems to have been entirely omitted; and indeed I cannot help ſuſpecting that it was intended to be omitted, at leaſt in this place, as in the Manciple's Prologue when the Coke is called upon to tell a Tale there is no intimation of his having told one before. Perhaps our Author might think that three Tales of *harlotrie*, as he calls it, together would be too much. However, as it is ſufficiently certain that the Coke's Prologue and the beginning of his Tale are genuine compoſitions they have their uſual place in this edition. There was not the ſame reaſon for inſerting The Story of Gamelyn, which in ſome mſſ. is annexed to The Coke's Tale. It is not to be found in any of the mſſ. of the firſt authority, and the manner, ſtyle, and verſification, all prove it to have been the work of an author much inferiour to Chaucer. I did not therefore think myſelf warranted to publiſh it a ſecond time among The Canterbury Tales, though as a relick of our ancient poetry, and the foundation perhaps of Shakeſpeare's *As you Like It*, I could have wiſhed to ſee it more accurately printed than it is in the only edition which we have of it.

§ 14. In *the Prologue to The Man of Lawe's Tale* Chaucer recalls our attention to the action (if I may ſo call it) of his drama, the journey of the pilgrims. They had ſet out ſoon after *the day began to ſpring*, [ver. 824 and f.] When the Reve was beginning to tell his

Tale they were in the neighbourhood of Deptford and Greenwich, and it was *half way prime*, that is, I suppose, *half way* past *prime*, about half an hour after seven A. M. [ver. 3904, 5.] How much further they were advanced upon their road at this time is not said, but the hour of the day is pointed out to us by two circumstances: we are first told [ver. 4422, 3,] that

——the sonne
The ark of his artificial day had ronne
The fourthe part and half an hour and more——

and secondly, [ver. 4432,] that he was "five-and-forty "degrees high;" and this last circumstance is so confirmed by the mention of a corresponding phænomenon that it is impossible to suspect any errour in the number. The equality in length of shadows to their projecting bodies can only happen when the sun is at the heighth of five-and-forty degrees. Unfortunately however this description, though seemingly intended to be so accurate, will neither enable us to conclude with the mss. that it was *ten of the clock*, nor to fix upon any other hour, as the two circumstances just mentioned are not found to coincide in any part of the 28th (or of any other) day of April (14) in this cli-

(14) The 28th day of April, in the time of Chaucer, answering to our 6th or 7th of May, the sun, in the latitude of London, rose about half hour after four, and the length of the artificial day was a little more than fifteen hours. *A fourth part* of fifteen hours (= three hours forty-five minutes) *and half an hour and more*—— may be fairly computed to make together four hours and a half, which being reckoned from four one half A. M. give the time of the day exactly nine A. M. but the sun was not at the altitude of 45° till about half hour after nine. In like manner if we take the 18th day (according to all the editions and some mss.) we shall find that the sun indeed was 45° high at ten A. M. exactly, but that *the fourth*

mate. All that we can conclude with certainty is, that it was *not past* ten of the clock.

The compliments which Chaucer has introduced upon his own Writings are modest enough, and quite unexceptionable; but if the reflection [ver. 4497, and f.] upon those who relate such stories as that of Canace or of Apollonius Tyrius was levelled at Gower, as I very much suspect, it will be difficult to reconcile such an attack to our notions of the strict friendship which is generally supposed to have subsisted between the two bards (15.) The attack too at this time must appear the more extraordinary on the part of our bard, as he is just going to put into the mouth of his Man of Lawe a Tale, of which almost every circumstance is borrowed from Gower. The fact is that the story of Canace is related by Gower in his

part of the day *and half an hour and more* had been completed at nine A. M.——In this uncertainty I have left the text as I found it in all the best mss. only *ms. H A.* does not express the hour, but reads thus;

Yt was atte cloke——

(15) There is another circumstance which rather inclines me to believe that their friendship suffered some interruption in the latter part of their lives. In the new edition of the *Confessio Amantis*, which Gower published after the accession of Henry IV. the verses in praise of Chaucer [fol. 190. b. col. 1, ed. 1532,] are omitted. [See *ms. Harl.* 3869.] Though perhaps the death of Chaucer at that time had rendered the compliment contained in those verses less proper than it was at first, that alone does not seem to have been a sufficient reason for omitting them, especially as the original date of the work, in the 16 of Richard II. is preserved. Indeed the only other alterations which I have been able to discover are toward the beginning and end, where every thing which had been said in praise of Richard in the first edition is either left out or converted to the use of his successor.

Conf. Amant. b. iii, and the ſtory of Apollonius (16) (or Apollynus, as he is there called) in the viiith book of the ſame work; ſo that if Chaucer really did not mean to reflect upon his old friend his choice of theſe two inſtances was rather unlucky.

§ 15. *The Man of Lawe's Tale*, as I have juſt ſaid, is taken, with very little variation, from Gower, *Conf. Amant.* b. iii. If there could be any doubt, upon a curſory peruſal of the two Tales, which of them was written firſt, the following paſſage, I think, is ſufficient to decide the queſtion. At ver. 5505 Chaucer ſays—

Som men wold ſayn how that the child Maurice,
Doth this meſſage until this emperour—

(16) The hiſtory of Apollonius King of Tyre was ſuppoſed by Mark Welſer, when he printed it in 1595, to have been tranſlated from the Greek a thouſand years before. [*Fabr. Bib. Gr.* v. 6. p. 821.] It certainly bears ſtrong marks of a Greek original, though it is not (that I know) now extant in that language. The rythmical poem under the ſame title, in modern Greek, was retranſlated (if I may ſo ſpeak) from the Latin—*απο Λατινικης εις Ρωμαΐκην γλωσσαν*. [*Du Freſne, Index Author. ad Gloſſ. Græc.*] When Welſer printed it he probably did not know that it had been publiſhed already (perhaps more than once) among the *Geſta Romanorum*. In an edition which I have, printed at Rouen in 1521, it makes the 154th chapter. Toward the latter end of the 12th century Godfrey of Viterbo, in his Pantheon or univerſal Chronicle, inſerted this romance as part of the hiſtory of the third Antiochus, about 200 years before Chriſt. It begins thus, [*mſ. Reg.* 14 C. xi,]

Filia Seleuci regis ſtat clara decore
Matreque defuncta pater arſit in ejus amore.
Res habet effectum, preſſa puella dolet.

The reſt is in the ſame metre, with one pentameter only to two hexameters.—Gower, by his own acknowledgment, took his ſtory from the Pantheon, as the author (whoever he was) of Pericles Prince of Tyre profeſſes to have followed Gower.

R ij

and we read in Gower that Maurice is actually ſent upon this meſſage to the emperour. We may therefore fairly conclude that in this paſſage Chaucer alludes to Gower, who had treated the ſame ſubject before him, but, as he inſinuates, with leſs propriety.

I do not however ſuppoſe that Gower was the inventor of this Tale: it had probably paſſed through ſeveral hands before it came to him. I find among the *Cotton, mſſ. Cal. A.* ii. fol. 69, an old Engliſh rhyme entitled *Emare*, in which the heroine under that name goes through a ſeries of adventures for the moſt part exactly ſimilar to thoſe of Conſtance (17:) but neither was the author of this rhyme the inventor of the ſtory, for in fol. 70. *a*, he refers to his original *in Romans* or French; and in the laſt ſtanza he tells us expreſsly——

> Thys ys on of *Brytayne layes*
> That was uſed by olde dayes.

Of the *Brytayne layes* I ſhall have occaſion to ſpeak more at large when I come to The Frankelein's Tale.

§ 16. The Man of Lawe's Tale, in the beſt mſſ. is followed by The Wife of Bathe's Prologue and Tale, and therefore I have placed them ſo here; not however merely in compliance with authority, but becauſe, according to the common arrangement, in The Marchant's Tale (18) there is a direct reference to The

(17) The chief differences are that Emarè is originally expoſed in a boat for refuſing to comply with the inceſtuous deſires of the emperour her father; that ſhe is driven on the coaſt of Galys or Wales, and married to the king of that country. The contrivances of the ſtepmother, and the conſequences of them, are the ſame in both ſtories.

(18) ỽ. 9559, Juſtine ſays to his brother January——

> The Wif of Bathe, if ye han underſtonde,
> Of mariage, which ye han now in honde,
> Declared hath ful wel in litel ſpace——

Wife of Bathe's Prologue before it has been ſpoken. Such an impropriety I was glad to remove upon the authority of the beſt mſſ. though it had been acquieſced in by all former editors, eſpecially as the ſame mſſ. pointed out to me an other (I believe the true) place for both The Marchant's and The Squier's Tales, which have hitherto been printed immediately after The Man of Lawe's. But of that hereafter.

§ 17. The want of a few lines to introduce *The Wife of Bathe's Prologue* is perhaps one of thoſe defects, hinted at above, which Chaucer would have ſupplied if he had lived to finiſh his Work. The extraordinary length of it, as well as the vein of pleaſantry that runs through it, is very ſuitable to the character of the ſpeaker. The greateſt part muſt have been of Chaucer's own invention, though one may plainly ſee that he had been reading the popular invectives againſt marriage and women in general, ſuch as *The Roman de la Roſe*, *Valerius ad Rufinum de non ducendá uxore*, and particularly *Hieronymus contra Jovinianum* (19.)

alluding very plainly to this Prologue of the Wife of Bath. The impropriety of ſuch an alluſion in the mouth of Juſtine is groſs enough. The truth is that Chaucer has inadvertently given to a character in The Merchant's Tale an argument which the Merchant himſelf might naturally have uſed upon a ſimilar occaſion, after he had heard the Wife of Bath. If we ſuppoſe, with the editions, that the Wife of Bath had not at that time ſpoken her Prologue the impropriety will be increaſed to an incredible degree.

(19) The holy Father, by way of recommending celibacy, has exerted all his learning and eloquence (and he certainly was not deficient in either) to collect together and aggravate whatever he could find to the prejudice of the female ſex. Among other things he has inſerted his own tranſlation (probably) of a long extract from what he calls—*liber aureolus*

§ 18. *The Wife of Bathe's Tale* ſeems to have been taken from the ſtory of Florent in Gower, *Conf. Amant.* b. i, or perhaps from an older narrative in the *Geſta Romanorum*, or ſome ſuch collection, from which the ſtory of Florent was itſelf borrowed. However that may have been, it muſt be allowed that Chaucer has conſiderably improved the fable by lopping off ſome improbable as well as unneceſſary circumſtances; and the transferring of the ſcene from Sicily to the court of King Arthur muſt have had a very pleaſing effect before the fabulous majeſty of that court was quite obliterated.

The old ballad entitled *The Marriage of Sir Gawaine*, [*Ancient Poetry*, vol. iii. p. 11,] which the learned editor thinks may have furniſhed Chaucer with this Tale, I ſhould rather conjecture (with deference to ſo good a judge in theſe matters) to have been compoſed by one who had read both Gower and Chaucer.

§ 19. *The Tales of the Frere and the Sompnour* are well ingrafted upon that of The Wife of Bath. The ill humour which ſhews itſelf between thoſe two characters is quite natural, as no two profeſſions at that time

Theophraſti de nuptiis.——Next to him in order of time was the treatiſe entitled *Epiſtola Valerii ad Rufinum de non ducendâ uxore, mſ. Reg.* 12 *D.* iii. It has been printed (for the ſimilarity of its ſentiments I ſuppoſe) among the works of St. Jerome, though it is evidently of a much later date. Tanner (from *Wood's mſ. Coll.*) attributes it to Walter Map, [*Bib. Brit*, v. *Map.*] I ſhould not believe it to be older, as John of Saliſbury, who has treated of the ſame ſubject in his *Polycrat.* l. viii. c. xi, does not appear to have ſeen it.——To theſe two books Jean de Meun has been obliged for ſome of the ſevereſt ſtrokes in his *Roman de la Roſe*, and Chaucer has transfuſed the quinteſſence of all the three works (upon the ſubject of matrimony) into his Wife of Bathe's Prologue and Merchant's Tale.

were at more constant variance. The regular clergy, and particularly the Mendicant Freres, affected a total exemption from all ecclesiastical jurisdiction except that of the Pope, which made them exceedingly obnoxious to the bishops, and of course to all the inferiour officers of the national hierarchy.

I have not been able to trace either of these Tales to any author older than Chaucer, and possibly they may both have been built upon some traditional pleasantries which were never before committed to writing.—I am obliged to Mr. Steevens for pointing out to me a story which has a great resemblance, in its principal incidents, to The Frere's Tale: it is quoted by D'Artigny, *Memoires d'Histoire, &c.* t. iii. p. 238, from a collection of sermons by an anonymous Dominican, printed about the beginning of the 16th century, under the title of *Sermones Discipuli*.

§ 20. *The Clerke's Tale* is in a different strain from the three preceding. He tells us, in his Prologue, that he learned it from Petrarch at Padua; and this (by the way) is all the ground that I can find for the notion that Chaucer had seen Petrarch (20) in Italy. It

(20) I can find no older or better authority for this notion than the following passage in Speght's life of Chaucer, prefixed to the edit. in 1597: "Some write that he with Petrarke was "present at the marriage of Lionell Duke of Clarence with "Violante daughter of Galeasius Duke of Millaine; yet Paul- "lus Jovius nameth not Chaucer, but Petrarke, he sayth, was "there." It appears from an instrument in Rymer [*Liberat.* 42 Ed. III. m. 1,] that the Duke of Clarence passed from Dover to Calais, in his way to Milan, in the spring of 1368, with a retinue of 457 men and 1280 horses. That Chaucer might have attended the duke upon this occasion is not impossible. He had been, probably, for some time in the king's service, and had received the year before a grant of an annuity of 20

is not easy to say why Chaucer should chuse to own an obligation for this Tale to Petrarch rather than to

marks-----" Pro bono servitio, quod dilectus Vallettus noster, " Galfridus Chaucer nobis impendit et impendet in futurum." [*Pat.* 41 Ed. III. p. 1. m. 13, *ap. Rymer.*] There is a curious account of the feast at this marriage in the *Chronica di Mantova of Aliprandi*, [*Murator. Antiq. Med. Ævi.* vol. v. p. 11678, *et seq.*] but he does not give the names of the

Grandi Signori e Baroni Inghilese,

who were (as he says)

Con Messere Lionell' in compagnia.

The most considerable of them were probably those twenty-six (knights and others) who before their setting out for Milan procured the king's license to appoint attornies-general to act for them here. [*Franc.* 42 Ed. III. m. 8. *ap. Rymer.*] The name of Chaucer does not appear among them.-----The embassy to Genoa, to which Chaucer was appointed in November 1372, might possibly have afforded him another opportunity of seeing Petrarch. But in the first place, it is uncertain whether he ever went upon that embassy. If he did, the distance from Genoa to Padua, where Petrarch resided, is considerable; and I cannot help thinking that a reverential visit from a minister of the King of England would have been so flattering to the old man that either he himself or some of his biographers must have recorded it. On the other hand, supposing Chaucer at Genoa, it is to be presumed that he would not have been deterred by the difficulties of a much longer journey from paying his respects to the first literary character of the age: and it is remarkable that the time of this embassy, in 1373, is the precise time at which he could have learned the story of Griseldis *from Petrarch at Padua*; for Petrarch, in all probability, made his translation *in that very year*, and he died in July of the year following.—The inquisitive and judicious author of *Mémoires pour la vie de Petrarque*, gave us hopes [*Pref. to* t. ii. p. 6,] that he would shew that Chaucer was in connection (*en liaison*) with Petrarch. As he has not

Boccace, from whose Decameron, d. x. n. 10, it was translated by Petrarch in 1373, (the year before his death) as appears by a remarkable letter which he sent with his translation to Boccace. [*Opp. Petrarch.* p. 540—7, *edit. Bas.* 1581.] It should seem too from the same letter that the story was not invented by Boccace, for Petrarch says "that it had always pleased him *when he heard it many years before*" (21,) whereas he had not seen The Decameron till very lately.

§ 21. In the *ballade* with which the Clerk concludes his Tale I have changed the order of the three last stanzas, so as to make it end—

And let him *care*, and *wepe*, and wringe, and *waile*---

fulfilled his promise in a later (I fear the last) volume of his very ingenuous work, I suspect that his more accurate researches have not enabled him to verify an opinion which he probably at first adopted upon the credit of some biographer of Chaucer.

(21) —"Cum et mihi semper *ante multos annos audita* placuisset, et tibi usque adeo placuisse perpenderem, ut vulgari "eam stylo tuo censueris non indignam, et fine operis, ubi "rhetorum disciplina validiora quælibet collocari jubet." *Petrarch. loc. cit.* M. L'Abbé de Sade [*Mem. de Petr.* t. iii. p. 797,] says, that the story of Griseldis is taken from an ancient ms. in the library of M. Foucault, entitled *Le Parement des Dames.* If this should have been said upon the authority of Manni, [*Ist. del. Decam.* p. 603,] as I very much suspect, and if Manni himself meant to refer to M. Galland's *Discours sur quelques anciens Poetes,* [*Mem. de l'Acad. des I. et B. L.* t. ii. p. 686,] we must look still further for the original of Boccace's novel. M. Galland says nothing, as I observe, of the *antiquity* of the ms. "Le titre" he says, "est *Le Parement des Dames*, a"vec des explications en Prose, où l'on trouve l'histoire de "Griselidis que feu M. Perrault a mise en vers:" but he says also expressly that it was a work of Olivier de la Marche, who was not born till many years after the death of Boccace.

and immediately after I have placed *The Marchant's Prologue*, beginning——

> *Weeping* and *wailing*, *care* and other ſorwe,
> I have enough.-----

This arrangement, which recommends itſelf at firſt ſight, is alſo ſupported by ſo many mſſ. of the beſt authority that without great negligence or dulneſs I could not have either overlooked or rejected it, eſpecially as the whole turn of The Marchant's Prologue, and the expreſs mention of Griſilde in ver. 9100, demonſtrate that he is ſuppoſed to ſpeak with The Clerke's Tale freſh in his memory.

§ 22. The ſcene of *The Marchant's Tale* is laid in Italy, but none of the names except Damian and Juſtin ſeem to be Italian, but rather made at pleaſure, ſo that I doubt whether the ſtory be really of Italian growth. The adventure of *The Peartree* I find in a ſmall collection of Latin fables written by one Adolphus, in elegiack verſes of his faſhion, in the year 1315. As this fable has never been printed but once, and in a book not commonly to be met with, I ſhall tranſcribe below (22) the material parts of it, and I dare ſay the reader will not be very anxious to ſee any more.

(22) *Adolphi Fabulæ, ap. Leyſer. Hiſt. Poet. Medii Ævi*, p. 2008.

Fabula I.

Cæcus erat quidam, cui pulcra virago————

— — — — — — —

In curtis viridi reſident hi ceſpite quadam
Luce. Petit mulier robur adire Pyri.
Vir favet, amplectens mox robur ubique lacertis.
Arbor adunca fuit, qua latuit juvenis.
Amplexatur eam dans baſia dulcia. Terram
Incepit colere vomere cum proprio.
Audit vir ſtrepitum, nam ſæpe carentia ſenſus
Unius in reliquo, noſco, vigere ſolet.
Heu miſer! exclamat; te lædit adulter ibidem.

Whatever was the real original of this Tale, the machinery of the Faeries, which Chaucer has used so happily, was probably added by himself; and indeed I cannot help thinking that his Pluto and Proserpina were the true progenitors of Oberon and Titania (23,) or rather that they themselves have, once at least, deigned to revisit our poetical system under the latter names.

Conqueror hoc illi qui dedit esse mihi.
Tunc Deus omnipotens, qui condidit omnia verbo,
Qui sua membra probat, vascla velut figulus,
Restituens aciem misero, tonat illico; Fallax
Femina, cur tanta fraude nocere cupis?
—— —— —— —— —— ——
Percipit illa virum. Vultu respondet alacri:
Magna dedi medicis; non tibi cura fuit.
Ast, ubi lustra sua satis uda petebat Apollo,
Candida splendescens Cynthia luce mera,
Tunc sopor irrepsit mea languida corpora: quædam
Astitit, insonuit auribus illa meis.
Ludere cum juvene studeas in roboris alto;
Prisca viro dabitur lux cito, crede mihi.
Quod feci. Dominus ideo tibi munera lucis
Contulit, idcirco munera redde mihi.
Addidit ille fidem mulieri, de prece cujus
Se sanum credit, mittit et omne nefas.
—— —— —— —— —— ——

The same story is inserted among the Fables of Alphonse, printed by Caxton in English, with those of Æsop, Avian, and Pogge, without date; but I do not find it in the original Latin of Alphonsus, *mss. Reg.* 10. *B.* xii, or in any of the French translations of his work that I have examined.

(23) This observation is not meant to extend further than the King and Queen of Faery, in whose characters I think it is plain that Shakespeare, in imitation of Chaucer, has dignified our Gothick elves with the manners and language of the classical gods and goddesses. In the rest of his Faery system Shakespeare seems to have followed the popular superstition of his own time.

§ 23. *The Prologue to The Squier's Tale* appears now for the firſt time in print. Why it has been omitted by all former editors I cannot gueſs, except, perhaps, becauſe it did not ſuit with the place which (for reaſons beſt known to themſelves) they were determined to aſſign to The Squier's Tale, that is, after The Man of Lawe's and before The Marchant's. I have choſen rather to follow the mſſ. of the beſt authority in placing *The Squier's Tale* after The Marchant's, and in connecting them together by this Prologue, agreeably as I am perſuaded to Chaucer's intention. The lines which have uſually been printed by way of Prologue to The Squier's Tale, as I believe them to have been really compoſed by Chaucer, though not intended for The Squier's Prologue, I have prefixed to The Shipman's Tale, for reaſons which I ſhall give when I come to ſpeak of that Tale.

§ 24. I ſhould have been very happy if the mſſ. which have furniſhed The Squier's Prologue had ſupplied the deficient part of his Tale, but I fear the judgment of Milton was to true, that this ſtory was *left half-told* by the Author. I have never been able to diſcover the probable original of this Tale, and yet I ſhould be very hardly brought to believe that the whole, or even any conſiderable part of it, was of Chaucer's invention.

§ 25. We are now arrived with the common editions (though by a different courſe) at The Frankeleine's Tale; and here again we muſt be obliged to the mſſ. not indeed, as in the laſt inſtance, for a *new* Prologue, but for authorizing us to prefix to this Tale of The Frankelein a Prologue which in the common editions is prefixed to The Tale of *the Marchant*, together with the true Prologue of that Tale, as printed above. It is ſcarce conceivable how theſe two Pro-

logues could ever be joined together and given to the ſame character, as they are not only entirely unconnected, but alſo in one point directly contradictory to each other; for in that which is properly *the Marchant's* he ſays expreſsly, [ver. 9110,] that he had been married *two monthes and not more*, whereas in the other the ſpeaker's chief diſcourſe is about *his ſon*, who is *grown up*. This therefore, upon the authority of the beſt mſſ. I have reſtored to the Frankelein; and I muſt obſerve that the ſentiments of it are much more ſuitable to his character than to that of the Marchant. It is quite natural that a wealthy landholder, of a generous diſpoſition, as he is deſcribed [ver. 332—62,] who has been Sheriff, Knight of the Shire, *&c.* ſhould be anxious to ſee his ſon (as we ſay) *a gentleman*, and that he ſhould talk ſlightingly of money in compariſon with poliſhed manners and virtuous endowments; but neither the character which Chaucer has drawn of his Marchant, nor our general notions of the profeſſion *at that time*, prepare us to expect from him ſo liberal a ſtrain of thinking.

§ 26. *The Frankelein's Tale*, as he tells us himſelf, is taken from a Britiſh lay (24;) and the names of

(24) "Les premieres chanſons Francoiſes furent nommées "des lais," ſays M. de la Ravaliere, *Poeſ. du Roi de Nav.* t. i. p. 215; and ſo far I believe he is right. But I ſee no foundation for ſuppoſing with him (in the ſame page) that the lay was *une ſorte d'elegie*, and that it was derived *du mot Latin* Leſſus, *qui ſignifie des plaintes*; or [in p. 217,] that it was *la chanſon-----la plus majeſtueuſe et la plus grave.* It ſeems more probable that *lai* in French was anciently a generical term anſwering to *ſong* in Engliſh. The paſſage which M. de la Ravaliere has quoted from *Le Brut*,

Molt ſot de *lais*, molt ſot de notes———

persons and places, as well as the scene and circumstances of the story, make this account extremely pro-

is thus rendered by our Layamon. [See before, *Essay*, &c. n. 46,]

> Ne cuthe na mon swa muchel of *song*.

The same word is used by Peirol d'Alvergna, *ms. Crofs*, fol.85, to denote the *songs* of *birds* (certainly not of the *plaintive* kind)

> Et li ausell s'en van enamoran
> L'uns per l'autre, et fan vantas (or *cantas*) et *lais*.

For my own part I am inclined to believe that *liod*, Island. *lied*, Teuton. *leoth*, Saxon, and *lai*, French, are all to be deduced from the same Gothick original.—But beside this general sense, the name of *lay* was particularly given to the French translations of certain poems originally composed in Armorican Bretagne, and in the Armorican language: I say *the French translations*, because *lay* not being (as I can find) an Armorican word, could hardly have been the name by which a species of poetry not imported from France was distinguished by the first composers in Bretagne.------The chief (perhaps the only) collection of these *lais* that is now extant was translated into French octosyllable verse by a poetess who calls herself *Marie*, the same (without doubt) who made the translation of *Esope*, quoted by Pasquier [*Rech.* l. viii. ch. 1,] and Fauchet, [*L.* ii. n. 84.] and placed by them in the reign of St. Louis, about the middle of the 13th century. Both her works have been preserved together in *ms. Harl.* 978, in a fair hand, which I see no reason to judge more recent than the latter end of that century.—The *lais* (with which only we are at present concerned) were addressed by her to some king, fol. 139;

> En le honur de vous, *noble reis*,
> Ki tant estes pruz e curteis,
> A ki tute joie se encline,
> E en ki quoer tuz biens racine,
> M'entremis des *lais* assembler,
> Par rime faire e reconter.——

A few lines after she names herself,

> Oez, Seignurs, ke dit *Marie*.——

bable. The lay itſelf is either loſt or buried (perhaps for ever) in one of thoſe ſepulchres of mſſ. which, by

The titles of the poems in this collection, to the number of twelve, are cited in the Harlein Catalogue: they are, in general, the names of the principal perſons in the ſeveral ſtories, and are moſt of them evidently Armorican; and I think no one can read the ſtories themſelves without being perſuaded that they were either really tranſlated from the Armorican language, or at leaſt compoſed by one who was well acquainted with that language and country.——Though theſe poems of Marie have of late been ſo little known as to have entirely eſcaped the reſearches of Fauchet and other French antiquaries, they were formerly in high eſtimation. Denis Piramus, a very tolerable verſifier of the Legend of St. Edmund the King [*mſ. Cotton, Dom. A.* xi,] allows that Dame Marie (as he calls her) had great merit in the compoſition of her lays, *though they are not all true*——

E ſi en eſt ele mult loee,
E la ryme par tut amee.

A tranſlation of her *lays* (as it ſhould ſeem) into one of the northern languages was among the books given by Gabriel de la Gardie to the univerſity of Upſal, under the title of *Variæ Britannorum Fabulæ*. [See the deſcript. of the book by Stephanius, in *Cat. Lib. Septent.* at the end of *Hickes, Gr. A. S. ed.* 1689, 4to, p. 180.] That Chaucer had read them I think extremely probable, not only from a paſſage in his Dreme, [ver. 1820—1926,] which ſeems to have been copied from the lay of Elidus, but alſo from the manner in which he makes the Frankelein ſpeak of the Bretons and their compoſitions. [See the note on ver. 11021.]—However, in Chaucer's time there were other Britiſh lays extant beſide this collection by Marie. Emarè has been mentioned before, § 15. An old Engliſh ballad of Sir Gowther [*mſ. Reg.* 17 *B.* xliii,] is ſaid by the writer to have been taken *out of one of the layes of Britanye*: in another place he ſays—*the firſt lay of Britanye*. The original of The Frankelein's Tale was probably a third. There were alſo lays which did not pretend to be Britiſh, as *Le Lay d'Ariſtote*, *Li Lais de l'Oiſelet*, [Fa-

courtesy, are called Libraries; but there are two imitations of it extant by Boccace, the first in the fifth book of his Philocopo, and the second in The Decam. d. x. n. 5. They agree in every respect with each other, except that the scene and the names are different, and in the latter the narration is less prolix and the style less flowery than in the former, which was a juvenile work (25.). The only material point in which Boc-

bliaux, *tom.* i,] *Le Lai du Corn*, by Robert Bikez, [*mſ. Bod.* 1687,] is said by him to have been invented by Garaduc, who accomplished the adventure in the ballad entitled *The Boy and the Mantle*, [*Anc. Poet.* v. iii. p. 1,] which I suspect to have been made up out of this lay, and Le Court Mantel, the successful knight, is called Cradock. Robert Bikez says further, that the horn was still to be seen at Cirencester;

> Q'fust a *Cirincetre*
> A une haute feste,
> La pureit il veer
> Icest corn tout pur veir,
> Coo dist *Robert Bikez*——.

In none of these lays do we find the qualities attributed to that sort of composition by M. de la Ravaliere. According to these examples we should rather define the lay to be a species of serious narrative poetry, of a moderate length, in a simple style and light metre. Serious is here opposed (not to pleasant, but) to ludicrous, in order to distinguish the lay from the *conte* or *fabliau*; as on the other hand its moderate length distinguishes it from the *geste*, or common Roman. All the lays that I have seen are in light metre, not exceeding eight syllables. See before, *Essay*, &c. n. 60.

(25) I saw once an edition of the Philocopo, printed at Venice, 1563, fol. with a letter at the end of it, in which the publisher, Hieronymo Squarzaficho, says (if I do not misremember) "that this work was written by Boccace at twenty years "of age (about 1333,) while he was at Naples in the house of "John Barrile," [Johannes Barrillus is called by Boccace [*Ge-*

cace ſeems to have departed from his original is this, inſtead of *the removal of the rockes* the lady deſires *a garden full of the flowers and fruits of May in the month of January;* and ſome ſuch alteration was certainly neceſſary when the ſcene came to be removed from Bretagne to Spain and Italy, as it is in Boccace's novels (26.) I ſhould gueſs that Chaucer has preſerved pretty faithfully the principal incidents of the Britiſh Tale, tho' he has probably thrown in ſome ſmaller circumſtances to embelliſh his narration. The long liſt of virtuous women in Dorigene's ſoliloquy is plainly copied from *Hieronymus contra Jovinianum.*

neal. Deor. l. xiv. c. 19,] *magni ſpiritus homo.* He was ſent by King Robert to attend Petrarch to his coronation at Rome, and is introduced by the latter in his ſecond eclogue under the name of Idæus; "ab Idâ, monte Cretenſi, unde et ipſe oriundus fuit." *Intentiones eclogarum Franc. Petrarchæ, mſ. Bod.* 558.] Not knowing at preſent where to find that edition, I am obliged to rely upon my memory only for this ſtory, which I think highly probable, though it is not mentioned (as I recollect) by any of the other biographers of Boccace. A good life of Boccace is ſtill much wanted.----The adventures of Florio and Biancofiore (which make the principal ſubject of the Philocopo) were famous long before Boccace, as he himſelf informs us, l. i. p. 6. edit. 1723. Floris and Blancaflor are mentioned as illuſtrious lovers by Matfres Eymengau de Bezers, a Languedocian poet, in his *Breviari d'amor*, dated in the year 1288, *mſ. Reg.* 19 C. i. fol. 199. It is probable however that the ſtory was enlarged by Boccace, and particularly, I ſhould ſuppoſe that the Love-queſtions in l. v, (the fourth of which queſtions contains the novel referred to in the text) were added by him.

(26) The Conte Boiardo (the precurſor and model of Arioſto) in his *Orlan. Inamorato*, l. i. ca. 12, has inſerted a tale upon the plan of Boccace's two novels, but with conſiderable alterations, which have carried the ſtory, I apprehend, ſtill further from its Britiſh original.

§ 27. Thus far I flatter myself I have been not unsuccessful in restoring the true order and connection with each other of The Clerke's, The Marchante's, The Squiere's, and The Frankeleine's Tales; but with regard to the next step which I have taken I must own myself more dubious. In all the editions the Tales of The Nonne and The Channone's Yeman precede The Doctoure's, but the best mss. agree in removing those Tales to the end of The Nonne's Preeste's, and I have not scrupled to adopt this arrangement, which is, I think, indisputably established by the following consideration; when the Monk is called upon for his Tale the pilgrims were near Rochester, [ver. 13932,] but when the Chanon overtakes them they were advanced to Boughton-under-Blee, [ver. 16024,] twenty miles beyond Rochester, so that the Tale of The Chanone's Yeman, and that of The Nonne to which it is annexed, cannot with any propriety be admitted till after The Monke's Tale, and consequently not till after The Nonne's Preeste's, which is inseparably linked to that of The Monk.

§ 28. These two Tales therefore of The Nonne and The Chanone's Yeman being removed out of the way The Doctoure's comes clearly next to The Frankeleine's; but how they are to be connected together, and whether at all, is a matter of doubt. What I have printed by way of Prologue to The Doctoure's Tale I found in one of the best mss. but only in one; in the others it has no Prologue. The first line applies so naturally and smartly to the Frankeleine's conclusion, that I am strongly inclined to believe it from the hand of Chaucer, but I cannot say so much for the five following; I would therefore only wish these lines to be received for the present (according to the law-phrase) *de bene esse*, till they shall either be more

authentically eſtabliſhed or ſuperſeded by the diſcovery of the genuine Prologue.

§ 29. In *The Doctoure's Tale* beſide Livy (who is quoted) Chaucer may poſſibly have followed Gower in ſome particulars, who has alſo related the ſtory of Virginia, *Conf. Amant.* b. vii, but he has not been a ſervile copiſt of either of them.

§ 30. The Pardonere's Tale has a Prologue which connects it with The Doctoure's. There is alſo a pretty long preamble, which may either make part of the Prologue or of the Tale. The mſſ. differ in this point. I have choſen to throw it into the Tale, and to confine the Prologue to what I ſuppoſe to be its proper uſe, the introduction of the new ſpeaker. When he is once in complete poſſeſſion of his office of entertaining the company his preface or digreſſions ſhould all, I think, be equally conſidered as parts of his Tale.

The mere outline of *The Pardonere's Tale* is to be found in the *Cento Novelle Antiche*. Nov. lxxxii.

§ 31. *The Tale of the Shipman* in the beſt mſſ. has no Prologue: what has been printed as ſuch in the common editions is evidently ſpurious. To ſupply this defect I have ventured, upon the authority of one mſ. (and I confeſs not one of the beſt) to prefix to this Tale the Prologue which has uſually been prefixed to the Tale of the Squier. As this Prologue was undoubtedly compoſed by Chaucer it muſt have had a place ſomewhere in this edition, and if I cannot prove that it was really intended by him for this place, I think the reader will allow that it fills the vacancy extremely well. The Pardonere's Tale may very properly be called *a thrifty tale*, and he himſelf *a lerned man*, [ver. 12905—8,] and all the latter part, though highly improper in the mouth of the *curteis Squier*, is perfectly ſuited to the character of the Shipman.

This Tale is generally ſuppoſed to be taken from The Decameron, d. viii. n. 1, but I ſhould rather believe that Chaucer was obliged to ſome older French *fableour*, from whom Boccace had alſo borrowed the ground-work of his novel, as in the caſe of The Reve's Tale. Upon either ſuppoſition a great part of the incidents muſt probably have been of his own invention.

§ 32. The tranſition from the Tale of The Shipman to that of The Prioreſſe is happily managed. I have not been able to diſcover from what legende of The Miracles of our Lady The Prioreſſe's Tale is taken. From the ſcene being laid in Aſia it ſhould ſeem that this was one of the oldeſt of the many ſtories which have been propagated, at different times, to excite or juſtify ſeveral mercileſs perſecutions of the Jews upon the charge of murthering Chriſtian children (27.) The ſtory of Hugh of Lincoln, which is mentioned in in the laſt ſtanza, is placed by Matthew Paris under the year 1255.

(27) In the firſt four months of the *Acta Sanctorum*, by Bollandus, I find the following names of children canonized, as having been murdered by Jews; xxv Mart. Willielmus Norwicenſis, 1144. Richardus, Pariſiis, 1179. xvii Apr. Rudolphus, Bernæ, 1287. Wernerus, Weſaliæ. *an. eod.* Albertus, Poloniæ, 1598. I ſuppoſe the remaining eight months would furniſh at leaſt as many more. See a Scottiſh ballad [*Rel. of Anc. Poet.* v. i. p. 32,] upon one of theſe ſuppoſed murders. The editor has very ingeniouſly conjectured that *Mirryland*, in ver. 1, is a corruption of *Milan*. Perhaps the real occaſion of the ballad may have been what is ſaid to have happened at Trent in 1475 to a boy called Simon. The Cardinal Hadrian, about fifty years after, mentioning the rocks of Trent, adds, "quo Judæi *ob Si-*" *monis cædem* ne aſpirare quidem audent." *Præf. ad librum de Serm. Lat.* The change of the name in the ſong from Simon to Hugh is natural enough in *this* country, where ſimilar ſtories of Hugh of Norwich and Hugh of Lincoln had been long current.

§ 33. Next to the Prioresse *Chaucer* himself is called upon for his Tale. In the Prologue he has dropped a few touches descriptive of his own person and manner, by which we learn that he was used to look much upon the ground, was of a corpulent habit, and reserved in his behaviour. His *Rime of Sire Thopas* was clearly intended to ridicule the *palpable gross* fictions of the common rhymers of that age, and still more, perhaps, the meanness of their language and versification. It is full of phrases taken from *Isumbras*, *Li beaus Desconus*, and other romances in the same style, which are still extant. A few of his imitations of them will be pointed out in the Notes.

§ 34. For the more complete reprobation of this species of rhyming even the Host, who is not to be suspected of too refined a taste, is made to cry out against it, and to cut short Sire Thopas in the midst of his adventures. Chaucer has nothing to say for his rhyme but that *it is the beste he can*, [ver. 13856,] and readily consents to tell another Tale; but having just laughed so freely at the bad poetry of his time he might think it, perhaps, too invidious to exhibit a specimen of better in his own person, and therefore his other Tale is in prose, a mere translation from *Le Livre de Melibee et de Dame Prudence*, of which several copies are still preserved in ms. (28.) It is in truth, as he calls it, [ver. 13868,] *a moral tale vertuous*, and was probably much esteemed in its time, but in this age of levity I doubt some readers will be apt to regret that he did not rather give us the remainder of Sire Thopas.

(28) Two copies of this work are in the Museum, *mss. Reg.* 19 *C.* vii, and 19 *C.* xi, in French prose. Du Fresnoy, *Biblioth. des Romans*, v. ii. p. 248, mentions two copies of the same work *en vers, dans la Bibliotheque Seguier*.

§ 35. *The Prologue of The Monke's Tale* connects it with Melibee. The Tale itself is certainly formed upon the plan of Boccace's great work *De casibus Virorum Illustrium*, but Chaucer has taken the several stories of which it is composed from different authors, who will be particularized in the Notes.

§ 36. After a reasonable number of melancholy ditties or tragedies, as the Monk calls them, he is interrupted by the Knight, and the Host addresses himself to the Nonne's Preest to tell them *swiche thing as may* their *hertes glade*.

The Tale of the Nonne's Preest is cited by Dryden, together with that of The Wife of Bath, as of Chaucer's own invention. But that great poet was not very conversant with the authors of which Chaucer's library seems to have been composed. The Wife of Bathe's Tale has been shewn above to be taken from Gower, and the fable of the Cock and the Fox, which makes the ground of The Nonne's Preeste's Tale, is clearly borrowed from a collection of Æsopean and other fables by Marie, a French poetess, whose collection of lais has been mentioned before in n. 24. As her fable is short and well told, and has never been printed, I shall insert it here at length (29,) and the more will-

(29) From *ms. Harl.* 978. f. 76.

D un cok recunte, ki estot
Sur un femer, e si chantot.
Par de lez li vient un gupilz,
Si l'apela par muz beaus diz.
Sire, fet il, muz te vei bel;
Unc ne vi si gent oisel.
Clere voiz as sur tute rien,
Fors tun pere, qe jo vi bien;
Unc oisel meuz ne chanta;
Mes il le fist meuz, kar il cluna.
Si puis jeo fere, dist li cocs.
Les eles bat, les oilz ad clos,

ingly becauſe it furniſhes a convincing proof how able Chaucer was to work up an excellent Tale out of very ſmall materials.

Chanter quida plus clerement.
Li gupil ſaut, e ſil prent;
Vers la foreſt od lui ſ'en va.
Par mi un champ, u il paſſa,
Curent apres tut li paſtur;
Li chiens le huent tut entur.
Veit le gupil, ki le cok tient,
Mar le guaina ſi par eus vient.
Va, fet li cocs, ſi lur eſcrie,
Qe ſui tuens, ne me larras mie.
Li gupil volt parler en haut,
E li cocs de ſa buche ſaut.
Sur un haut fuſt s'eſt muntez.
Quant li gupilz s'eſt reguardez,
Mut par ſe tient enfantille,
Que li cocs l'ad ſi enginne.
De mal talent e de droit ire
La buche commence a maudire,
Ke parole quant devereit taire.
Li cocs reſpunt, ſi dei jeo faire,
Maudire l'oil, ki volt cluiner,
Quant il deit guarder e guaiter,
Que mal ne vient a lur Seignur.
Ceo funt li fol tut li pluſur,
Parulent quant deivent taiſer,
Teiſent quant il deivent parler.

The reſemblance of Chaucer's Tale to this fable is obvious, and it is the more probable that he really copied from Marie, becauſe no ſuch fable is to be found either in the Greek Æſop or in any of the Latin compilations (that I have ſeen) which went about in the dark ages under the name of Æſop. Whether it was invented by Marie, or whether ſhe tranſlated it, with the reſt of her fables, from the Anglo-Saxon verſion of Æſop by King Alfred, (as ſhe ſays herſelf) I cannot pretend to determine. Though no Anglo-Saxon verſion of Æſop be now (as I can find) extant, there may have been one formerly, which may have paſſed (like many other tranſlations into that language) under the name of Alfred; and it may be urged in ſupport of the probability of Marie's poſitive aſſertion, that ſhe appears, from paſſa-

§ 37. The sixteen lines which are printed at the end of The Nonne's Preeste's Tale might perhaps more properly be considered as the beginning of the Prologue to the succeeding Tale, if it were certain what Tale was intended to succeed. In both Dr. Askew's mss. the last of these lines is read thus,—

Seide unto *the Nunne* as ye shul heer———

and there are six more lines to introduce her Tale; but as these six lines are manifestly forged for the purpose I have chosen rather to adhere to the other mss. which acknowledge themselves defective in this part, and give us The Nonne's Tale as I have done, without any introduction. It is very probable, I think, that Chaucer himself had not determined whether he should connect The Nonne's Tale with that of The Nonne's Preest, or whether he should interpose a Tale or two, or perhaps more, between them.

The Tale of the Nonne is almost literally translated from the life of St. Cecilia in the *Legenda Aurea* of Jacobus Januensis. It is mentioned by Chaucer as a separate work in his Legende of Good Women, [ver. 426,] under the title of *The Life of Seint Cecile*, and it still retains evident marks that it was not originally composed in the form of a Tale to be *spoken* by *the*

ges in her *lais*, to have had some knowledge of English. I must observe that the name of the king, whose English version she professes to follow, is differently stated in different mss. In the best ms. *Harl.* 978, it is plainly *Li reis Allured;* in a later ms. *Vesp.* B. xiv, it is *Li reis Henris*. Pasquier [*Recherches*, l. viii. c. i,] calls him *Li roy Auuert;* and Du Chesne (as quoted by Menage, v. *Roman*) *Li rois Mires:* but all the copies agree in making Marie declare that she translated her work *de l'Anglois en Roman*. A Latin Æsop, *ms. Reg.* 15 *A.* vii, has the same story of an English version by order of a *Rex Angliæ Affrus*.

Nonne (30.) However there can be no doubt that Chaucer meant to incorporate it into this collection of Canterbury Tales, as the Prologue of the Chanone's Yeman expressly refers to it.

§ 58. The introduction of *The Chanone's Yeman* to tell a Tale at a time when so many of the original characters remain to be called upon appears a little extraordinary. It should seem that some sudden resentment had determined Chaucer to interrupt the regular course of his Work in order to insert a satire against the alchymists. That their pretended science was much cultivated about this time (31,) and produced its usual

(30) The whole introduction is in the style of a person writing, and not of one speaking. If we compare it with the introduction to The Prioresse's Tale the difference will be very striking. See particularly ver. 15546;

Yet pray I you that *reden* that I *write*——

and in ver. 15530 the relater, or rather writer, of the Tale, in all the mss. (except one of middling authority) is called *Unworthy son of Eve*. Such little inaccuracies are strong proofs of an unfinished work. See before, p. 171.

(31) The first considerable coinage of gold in this country was begun by Edward III. in the year 1343, and according to Camden [in his *Remains, art. Money*,] "the alchymists did affirm (as an unwritten verity) that the rosenobles which were "coined soon after were made by projection or multiplication "alchymical of Raymond Lully in the Tower of London." In proof of this, "besides the tradition of the rabbies in that faculty," they alledged "the inscription, *Jesus autem transiens* "*per medium eorum ibat*;" which they profoundly expounded, *as Jesus passed invisible and in most secret manner by the midest of Pharisees, so that gold was made by invisible and secret art amidst the ignorant.* But others say that text was the only amulet used in that credulous warfaring age to escape dangers in battles. Thus Camden. I rather believe it was an amulet or charm principally used against thieves, upon the authority of the following passage of Sir John Mandeville, c. x. p. 137; "And

evils, may fairly be inferred from the act which was passed soon after, 5 Hen. IV. c. iv, to make it felony *to multiply gold or silver, or to use the art of multiplication.*

§ 39. In the *Prologue to The Manciples Tale* the pilgrims are supposed to be arrived at a little town called *Bob-up-and-down, Under-the-Blee, in Canterbury-way.* I cannot find a town of that name in any map, but it must have lain between Boughton (the place

" an half myle fro Nazarethe is the lepe of oure Lord; for the " Jewes ladden him upon an highe roche for to make him lepe " down and have slayn him; but Jesu passed amonges hem, and " lepte upon another roche; and yit ben the steppes of his feet " sene in the roche where he allyghte. And therefore seyn sum " men whan thei dreden hem of theses on ony weye, or of ene- " myes, *Jesus autem transiens per medium illorum ibat;* that is " to seyne, *Jesus forsothe passynge be the myddes of hem he wente;* " in tokene and mynde that oure Lord passed thorghe out the " Jewes crueltee, and scaped safly fro hem; *so surely mowe men* " *passen the perile of theses.*" See also *Catal. mss. Harl.* n. 2966. It must be owned that a spell against thieves was the most serviceable if not the most elegant inscription that could be put upon gold coin.—Ashmole, in his *Theatrum Chemicum*, p. 443, has repeated this ridiculous story concerning Lully with additional circumstances, as if he really believed it, though Lully, by the best accounts, had been dead above twenty years before Edward III. began to coin gold.——The same author (*Mercuriophilus Anglicus*, as he styles himself) has inserted among his *Hermetique Mysteries*, [p. 213,] an old English poem under the title of *Hermes Bird*, which (he says in his Notes, p. 467,) was thought to have been written originally by Raymund Lully, or at least made English by Cremer, [*Abbot of Westminster, and scholar to Lully*, p. 465.] The truth is that the poem is one of Lydgate's, and had been printed by Caxton under its true title, *The Chorle and the Bird*, and the fable on which it is built is related by Petrus Alphonsus [*de Clericali Disciplinâ, mss. Reg.* 10 B. xii,] who lived above two hundred years before Lully.

laſt mentioned) and Canterbury. The fable of the Crow, which is the ſubject of *The Manciple's Tale*, has been related by ſo many authors, from Ovid down to Gower, that it is impoſſible to ſay whom Chaucer principally followed. His ſkill in new-dreſſing an old ſtory was never perhaps more ſucceſsfully exerted.

§ 40. After the Tale of the Manciple the common editions, ſince 1542 (32,) place what is called The

(32) In the edition of 1542, when The Plowman's Tale was firſt printed, it was placed *after* The Perſon's Tale. The editor, whoever he was, had not aſſurance enough (it ſhould ſeem) to thruſt it into the body of the Work. In the ſubſequent editions however, as it had probably been well received by the publick, upon account of its violent invectives againſt the church of Rome, it was advanced to a more honourable ſtation, next to The Manciple's Tale and *before* The Perſon's. The only account which we have of any mſ. of this Tale is from Mr. Speght, who ſays [Note prefixed to Plowman's Tale,] that he had "ſeene it in written hand in John Stowe's librarie in "a booke of ſuch antiquitie as ſeemed to have been written "neare to Chaucer's time." He does not ſay that it was *among The Canterbury Tales*, or that it had *Chaucer's name* to it. We can therefore only judge of it by the internal evidence, and upon that I have no ſcruple to declare my own opinion that it has not the leaſt reſemblance to Chaucer's manner either of writing or thinking in his other Works. Though he and Boccace have laughed at ſome of the abuſes of religion and the diſorders of eccleſiaſtical perſons, it is quite incredible that either of them, or even Wickliffe himſelf, would have railed at the whole government of the church in the ſtyle of this Plowman's Tale. If they had been diſpoſed to ſuch an attempt their times would not have borne it; but it is probable that Chaucer (though he has been preſſed into the ſervice of Proteſtantiſm by ſome zealous writers) was as good a Catholick as men of his underſtanding and rank in life have generally been. The neceſſity of auricular confeſſion, one of the great ſcandals of Popery, cannot be more ſtrongly inculcated than it is in the fol-

Plowman's Tale; but as I cannot underſtand that there is the leaſt ground of evidence, either external or internal, for believing it be a work of Chaucer's, I have not admitted it into this edition.

§ 41. *The Perſone's Prologue* therefore is here placed next to The Manciple's Tale, agreeably to all the mſſ. which are known, and to every edition before 1542. In this Prologue, which introduces the laſt Tale upon the journey to Canterbury, Chaucer has again pointed out to us the time of the day, but the hour by the clock is very differently repreſented in the mſſ. In ſome it is *ten*, in others *two*, in moſt of the beſt mſſ. *foure*, and in one *five*. According to the phænomena here mentioned, the ſun being 29° high, and the length of the ſhadow to the projecting body as 11 to 6, it was *between four and five*. As by this reckoning there were at leaſt three hours left to ſunſet, one does not well ſee with what propriety the Hoſt admoniſhes the Perſon to *haſte him*, becauſe *the ſonne wol adoun*, and to be *fructuous in litel ſpace*; and indeed the Perſon (know-

lowing Tale of the Perſon.—— I will juſt obſerve that Spenſer ſeems to ſpeak of the author of The Plowman's Tale as a diſtinct perſon from Chaucer, though (in compliance I ſuppoſe with the taſte of his age) he puts them both on the ſame footing. In the epilogue to The Shepherd's Calendar he ſays to his book—

> Dare not to match thy pipe with *Tityrus* his ſtyle,
> Nor with the Pilgrim that *the Plowman* play'd awhile.

I know that Mr. Warton [in his excellent Obſervations on Spenſer, v. i. p. 125,] ſuppoſes this paſſage to refer to The Viſions of Pierce Plowman, but my reaſon for differing from him is, that the author of the Viſions never, as I remember, ſpeaks of himſelf in the character of a Ploughman.———Of The Pilgrim's Tale, which has alſo, with as little foundation, been attributed to Chaucer, [*Speght's Life of Chaucer*,] I ſhall ſpeak in another place. See *Appendix to Preface, A.* n. (*c*).

ing probably how much time he had good) ſeems to have paid not the leaſt regard to his admonition, for his Tale (if it may be ſo called) is twice as long as any of the others. It is entitled in ſome mſſ. *Tractatus de Pœnitentiâ, pro Fabulâ, ut dicitur, Rectoris*; and I much ſuſpect that it is a tranſlation of ſome ſuch treatiſe. I cannot recommend it as a very entertaining or edifying performance at this day; but the reader will be pleaſed to remember, in excuſe both of Chaucer and his editor, that conſidering The Canterbury Tales as a great picture of life and manners the piece would not have been complete if it had not included the religion of the time.

§ 42. What is commonly called *The Retractation*, at the end of The Perſon's Tale, in ſeveral mſſ. makes part of that Tale; and certainly the appellation of *Litel Tretiſe* ſuits better with a ſingle Tale than with ſuch a voluminous work as the whole body of Canterbury Tales: but then, on the other hand, the recital which is made in one part of it of ſeveral compoſitions of Chaucer could properly be made by nobody but himſelf. I have printed it as I found it in *mſ. Aſk.* i, with a few corrections from other mſſ. and in the Notes I ſhall give the beſt account that I can of it.

Having thus gone through the ſeveral parts of The Canterbury Tales which are printed in this edition, it may not be improper in the concluſion of this Diſcourſe to ſtate ſhortly the parts which are wanting to complete the journey *to* Canterbury; of the reſt of Chaucer's intended plan (as has been ſaid before) we have nothing: ſuppoſing therefore the number of the pilgrims to have been *twenty-nine*, [ſee before, § 6,] and allowing the Tale of the Chanone's Yeman to ſtand in the place of that which we had a right to ex-

T iij

pect from the Knighte's Yeman, the Tales wanting will be only those of the *five* City-mechanicks and the Ploughman. It is not likely that the Tales told by such characters would have been among the most valuable of the set, but they might, and probably would, have served to link together those which at present are unconnected, and for that reason it is much to be regretted that they either have been lost, or (as I rather believe) were never finished by the Author (33.)

(33) When we recollect that Chaucer's papers must in all probability have fallen into the hands of his son Thomas, who at the time of his father's death was of full age, we can hardly doubt that all proper care was taken of them; and if the Tales in question had ever been inserted among the others, it is scarce conceivable that they should all have slipt out of all the copies of this Work of which we have any knowledge or information Nor is there any sufficient ground for imagining that so many Tales could have been suppressed by design, though such a supposition may perhaps be admitted to account for the loss of some smaller passages. See above, n. 8.

(B) *A List of mss. collated or consulted, with the abbreviations by which they are cited.*

IN THE MUSEUM.

A. Ms. Harl. 7335.
B. Ms. Reg. 18 C. ii. In *Urry's* list, vii.
C. Ms. Harl. 7334.
D. Ms. Reg. 17 D. xv. In *Urry's* list, viii.]
E. Ms. Harl. 7333.
F. Ms. Harl. 1758. In *Urry's* list, i.
G. Ms. Sloane. A. 1685, xxii D. In *Urry's* list, iii.
H. Ms. Sloane. A. 1686, xxii D. In *Urry's* list, iv.
I. Ms. Harl. 1239. In *Urry's* list, ii.

AT OXFORD. *In the Bodleian Library.*

B. α. N° 2527, in the printed catalogue.
B. β. N° 1234, *ibid.*
B. γ. N° 1476, *ibid.*
B. δ. N° 3360, *ibid.*
B. ε. N° 4138, *ibid.*
B. ζ. N° 6420, *ibid.*
N C. A ms. in the library of New-College.

AT CAMBRIDGE.

C. 1. In the publick library. N° D. d. 4, 24.
C. 2. *Ibid.* N° I. i. 3, 26.
T. Ms. in the library of Trinity-College, N° R. 3, 3.
Tt. Ibid. N° R. 3. 15.

Ask. 1, 2. Two mss. lent to me by the late Dr. Askew; the second has in it the arms of Henry Deane Archbishop of Canterbury, 1501—3.

HA. A ms. lent to me by Edward Haistwell Esq.

W. A mſ. in the poſſeſſion of the late Mr. P. C. Webb.

Ch. N. Two mſſ. deſcribed in the Pref. to ed. *Urr.* the one as belonging to Charles Cholmondeley Eſq. of Vale-Royal in Cheſhire, and the other to Mr. Norton of Southwick in Hampſhire. The editor quotes them from the collations of Mr. W. Thomas mentioned in *App. A.* n. (*n*.)

Of theſe mſſ. the moſt credit is certainly due to the five following, *viz. A. C.* 1, *Aſk.* 1, 2, and *HA*. The four laſt exhibit the Tales in exactly the ſame order in which they are printed in this edition; and ſo does *A*. except that it wants The Coke's Tale, [See the *Diſcourſe*, &c. § 13,] and has The Nonne's Tale inſerted between The Sompnoure's and The Clerke's. It is alſo unluckily very imperfect, beginning only at ver. 1204, and ending (with ſeveral intermediate breaks) at ver. 12610 in The Pardoner's Tale.

N. B. The editt. of Chaucer by Caxton and Pynſon are cited by theſe abbreviations, *Ca.* 1, 2, *Pynſ.* 1, 2.—*Sp.* and *Urr.* are put for the editt. by Speght and Urry.—*M.* ſtands for the edit. of the Prologue and Knight's Tale in 1737.--The other editt. are cited by their reſpective dates; if no date is mentioned the reference is to the edit. of 1542 by John Reyne.

EXTRACT

From Mr. Timothy Thomas's Preface to ed. Urry 1721.

For the correcting and improving a great number of places where the text had been corrupted in the common editions, and so made unintelligible, and sometimes downright nonsense, and that such pieces as were judged to be Chaucer's, which had not been before printed might be recovered and appear in this edition, and in short to make the book in all respects more correct and complete, it was thought necessary to collect not only all the printed editions of value, but also all the mss. that could be procured. I find no account of the printed copies which Mr. Urry had perused, but he has left a catalogue of the mss. made use of in this edition, which is very particular both with respect to the contents and condition of them, and also the names of the persons from whom they were borrowed, or by whose means they were procured, an Abstract of which is thought proper to be here inserted, not only to inform the reader of the advantages of this edition above the former ones, but also to inform any person that may hereafter undertake a new edition of this Author where to make his inquiries in order to a further improvement of him.

1. In the first place he mentions two mss. belonging to the right Hon. the Earl of Oxford; one of them is a large folio, written on vellum in a fair hand, marked 93, *B.* ii, and in the glossary, *H.* i, containing The Canterbury Tales, but it is imperfect in several places; it has The Tale of Gamelyn (which wants the beginning) as spoken by the Coke, and The Coke's Tale is the running-title of it. The ms. begins thus, *Here beginneth the book of The Tales of Caunterburye compiled by Geffraie Chauciers, of Brytayn chef poete.* It hath the Retractation after The Parson's Tale, and at the end of

it this note, *Here endeth the book of The Tales of Caunterburye, compyled by Geffraie Chaucers, of whos soule Jhu Crist have mercye. Amen, quod Cornhyll*, which seems to be the transcriber's name. This book has some particularities in the orthography, as *sch* for *sh*, (so *scho* for *she*) *w* sometimes for *u* or *v*, *y* very frequently for *i*. The first letters of such Tales as are perfect at the beginning are beautifully illuminated in this ms. and it is probable that the pictures of the pilgrims were intended to be inserted before their Tales, there being a void space left capable of containing them, but none of them were finished, unless we may suppose that of the Knight to be done, which might be the occasion of cutting out the first leaf of that Tale.

2. The other Harleian ms. is likewise written on vellum in a long folio, marked 67, C. 3, and contains besides the poem of Troilus and Creseide, part of The Knight's Tale, and the Tales of The Man of Lawe, The Wife of Bath, The Clerk of Oxenford, and The Frankelein, which last differs in the beginning from the printed editions. In the first letters of Troilus and Creseide (which begins the book) are the arms of Speke and Shepey empaled, and at the end of the Tales, which are written in another hand, is this note, which seems to be added by the writer of the latter part of it, *Vestre magnifice et generosissime dominacionis humilimus serviens et orat. heremita de Grenewych, mundo qui totaliter segregatus ac mentibus suorum fortunæ amicorum et hominum peroblitus.*

3. In the next place he describes two mss. which he had borrowed of the worthy and learned Dr. Sloan, now Sir Hans Sloan, one of them written on vellum, the other on paper: the former is imperfect at the beginning, and ends with the Tale of the Nonne's Preest; it hath The Legend of Gamelyn, but imperfect, as it is in other places.

4. Sir Hans Sloan's paper mſ. beſides other imperfections, wants all The Parſon's Tale, but The Legend of Gamelyn is there told by the Coke.

5. He then acknowledges the favour of the right Hon. the Earl of Caernarvon, now Duke of Chandos, in allowing him the peruſal of a very fair mſ. on vellum, well preſerved, containing all the Tales, and ending with the Retractation. It may be proper here once for all to advertiſe the reader that The Ploughman's Tale is not in any of the mſſ. which Mr. Urry deſcribes, nor in any other that I have ſeen or been informed of.

6. He borrowed from the Hon. Col. Hen. Worſely a paper mſ. imperfect at the beginning and end, containing all the Tales, but in a different order.

7. He ſaw two mſſ. in the royal library, one on vellum, N° 1541, *Lumley*, which contains all the Tales with the Retractation. The ſtory of Gamelyn is thus introduced (as it is in ſeveral other mſſ.) after that of The Unthrifty Prentice;

> But hereof woll I paſſe as now,
> And of yong Gamelyn I will tell you.

The Shipman's Tale, by the tranſcriber's miſtake, is in this mſ. entitled The Marchand's Tale, The Marchaunt's being before written in its proper place.

8. The other mſ. in the royal library is on paper, and contains the Tales as in the other, but is much torn in The Manciple's and Parſon's Tales. Before Gamelyn has it this rubrick, *Here endeth The Tale of the Cook, and here followeth another Tale of the ſame Cook, a long Legend of yong Gamelyn.*

9. He borrowed, by the means of the Rev. Mr. Harbin and Mr. Yarborough, of Mr. Edmond Canbey of Thorn in Yorkſhire, another fair mſ. well preſerved: this book wants The Coke's Tale and Gamelyn, and

also The Squire's and The Marchaunt's Tales, and is imperfect in the end.

10. He borrowed of Mr. Norton of Southwick in Hampshire, by the favour of John Chicheley Esq. a ms. which he guesses to have been written in the time of Richard II. the writing being very like that in the patent of that king to Chaucer for a pitcher of wine daily; but it is most miserably mangled, a great many leaves being cut out in every part of it, so that there is scarce one Tale or Prologue entire, and particularly The Parson's Tale has neither beginning nor end. The Legend of Gamelyn is introduced in this book by the same verses which have been before set down out of the vellum book in the royal library.

11. The Rev. and learned Dr. Jenkins, Master of St. John's College in Cambridge, and Margaret Professor in that university, procured from the publick library there a very fine ms. for his perusal, in which are many leaves wanting, which are supplied by a modern hand (as he thinks) out of the printed books: it hath before the Tales Chaucer's A, B, C, *Littera de Scogan*, *Ballad de bon Conseil*, a poem beginning

> In them when any hert is light,
> And flouris freshly spred and spring.

De amico ad amicum responsio, *V Bookis of Troilus and Creseide*: then follow the Tales in their order; but Mr. Urry does not take notice of The Tale of Gamelyn nor the Retractation in this book. After the Tales are the following poems; The Legend of good Women, Legenda Cleopatre Regine, The Legend of Pyramis and Thisbe, The Legend of Dido Queen of Carthage, The Legend of Hipsiphile and Medea, The Legend of Lucrece of Rome, The Legend of Philomene, The Legend of Phillis, The Legend of Hypermnestre, The Parlement of Foulis *in die Sancti* Valentini *tent*, The

Temple of Glass (but this is Dan Lydgate's *Supplicatio Amantis*) *La Compleyn*. There are in this book figures of some of the pilgrims on horseback illuminated, which Mr. Urry had not seen in any other ms. of this Author, and he doubts not but this book originally had them all. Before it is the picture of Chaucer drawn by Sir Thomas Occleve on a leaf of his book *De Regimine Principis*, and Mr. Urry had been informed of another upon the margin of one of the same books, and there is a third in the Cotton library at the end of *Otho*, *A*. xviii.; from which Mr. Urry very justly infers that Occleve, to preserve his master Chaucer's memory, caused his picture to be limned in every book that was presented by him to his friends, of the number of which seems to be that beautiful copy of it in the Royal Society's library, [N° 38,] which besides a picture of Occleve presenting a book to Henry V. had doubtless Chaucer's picture on a leaf, where that honourable mention is made of him, which has been cut out perhaps to adorn some ms. of Chaucer, such as that here described in the publick library at Cambridge, or that in the Cotton library, which last contains no more of Chaucer than those poems beginning, *Flie fro the prese*, &c. and *Sometyme the worlde so stedfast was and stable*, (which is there entitled *Balade Ryalle made by Poeticall Chaucyer*) Chaucer's Song to his empty Purse, and the first stanza of Troilus's song in the first book of that poem.

12. Mr. Urry gives an account of a ms. of the late Bishop of Ely which he had collated, containing all the Tales with Gamelyn and the Retractation, thus introduced at the end of The Parson's Tale, *Here takith the Maker of this book his leave*; and after it this rubrick, *Here endith The Canterbury Tales compiled by Geffrey Chaucer, of whose soule Jhu Christ have mercy. Amen.*

13. The Hon. Mrs. Thynne, widow of the Hon. Henry Thynne Esq. ſon to the late Lord Viſc. Weymouth, was pleaſed to lend him a mſ. purchaſed by her, which had belonged to Mr. Long, a Prebendary of the church of Exeter. It is a fair book, but is imperfect at the beginning and end, and wants The Coke's Tale and that of Gamelyn; but this defect is ſufficiently compenſated by the addition of two new pieces, not extant in any of the other mſſ. which are there inſerted between the Tale of the Chanon's Yeman and Chaucer's Tale of Melibeus, *viz.* The Adventure of the Pardoner and the Tapſter at the Inn in Canterbury, and The Merchant's Tale in the pilgrims' return from thence, of which more hereafter.

14. The laſt mſ. mentioned by Mr. Urry is a fair and perfect one, borrowed from Sir Nicholas L'Eſtrange. This he ſays was the beſt preſerved of any he had ſeen, and not deficient in any leaves that he had obſerved. He ſuppoſes it had been Sir Henry Spelman's, by the characters of *Sr H. S.* on the outſide of the cover, the book having been newly bound in 1623. He gives no farther account of it, but that it contains the following Tales, which being not ſet down as in his deſcription of the other mſſ. it ſhould ſeem he did not live to go through it.

With theſe helps Mr. Urry had made ſeveral corrections throughout the greateſt part of Chaucer's Works, and had prepared a fair copy for the preſs, written partly in his own hand and partly by Mr. Ainſworth, to the end of The Frankelein's Tale. He alſo printed propoſals for ſubſcriptions ſome time before his death, which happened in March 1714.

In the propoſals it was publiſhed that three new Tales of this Author, never yet printed, were recovered, and would be added to this edition, by which were certainly meant The Coke's Tale of Gamelyn, The Mer-

chant's Second Tale, or, The Hiſtory of Beryn, and The Adventure of the Pardoner and Tapſter at the Inn at Canterbury. Though the latter is not properly a Tale, but an account of the behaviour of the pilgrims, and particularly of the Pardoner, at their journey's end, and a kind of prologue to a ſet of Tales to be told in their return, it was not judged proper to make any alteration in that part of the titlepage, leſt it ſhould be thought that any thing is omitted in this edition which was intended by Mr. Urry.

As to The Tale of Gamelyn, Mr. Urry's ſentiments concerning it may be ſeen in the note before it. Mr. Selden was of opinion * that what is called The Tale of the Unthrifty Prentice was only a kind of prelude, and not the Tale itſelf, which the Coke intended to tell, and that thoſe two verſes which immediately precede it, *viz.*

And therewithall he lough and made [glad †] chere,
And ſeid his Tale, as you ſhall after here———

are miſplaced, and ſhould have come after it, as an introduction to The Tale of Gamelyn, and he ſays they were ſo placed in a very fair mſ. which he had, and in ſome others.

It were to be wiſhed that this Tale had been more carefully collated with the ſeveral mſſ. wherein it is found: it may be made much more perfect and correct from the two mſſ. which I have had an opportunity of collating, *viz.* the Harleian mſ. *H.* 1, and Mr. Cholmondeley's mſ. which ſhall be deſcribed in its proper place. I ſhall not take notice here of the minute variations, ſome of them which affect the ſenſe being noted in the gloſſary as occaſion offered; I ſhall only make a few remarks out of them in this place.

* De Synedriis Ebræorum. Amſt. 1679, l. ii. c. 2, § iii. p. 360. † So it is in *mſ. Ch.*

The reader will obferve a lacuna after verfe 477, which may be made up out of thofe mff. thus;

'Thanne feyde yong Gamelyn
Unto the championn,
'Thou art fafte aboute
For to brynge me adoun.

And ver. 530, 531, are thus read in *mf. Cb.*

There weren two gentellmen,
God yeve hem gode grace,
That comen to Gamelyn,
Were keperis of the place.

Ver. 540, 541;

Thanne feyde the championn,
So browke I my fwere.

After ver. 555, *mf. Cb.* proceed thus;

And feyde have Gamelyn, thee ring and the ram
For thee befte wraftelere, that evere here cam.
And thus wan, &c.

which may be made very good metre with very little alteration.

Inftead of *befte*, ver. 647, fhould be read *chefte*, *i. e.* quarrel, debate, &c. See Gower's *Conf. Amant.* l. ii. fol. 49, b. edit. 1554.

Ver. 706, may be read,

Of fiftene plowis land the prowe. [*See ver.* 713.]

Inftead of *bonde*, ver. 865, *H.* 1, hath *bound*; but *mf. Cb.* hath it *bandefaft*. In ver. 972 both mff. want *be*, which is only an explanation of *worthe*. After *rout*, ver. 1192, fhould follow;

Adam feyde Gamelyn,
What ben now thy redis?
Here comith the Shiregereve,
And woulde have our hedis.
Adam feyde to Gamelyn
My rede is now this, &c.

Instead of *ſay*, ver. 1226, the mſſ. have *ſee;* and ver. 1413, *Both huſbande and wif;* and ver. 1629, *And with the juſtice ſpeke*. And ver. 1692 and the following verſes may out of them be thus read;

Gamelyn ſette hym adoun
In the Juſtic'is ſete,
And Adam and Ote his brother *
Settyn at his fete.
Whanne Gamelyn was ſette
In the Juſtic'is ſtede,
Will ye herin of a bourde,
That Gamelyn [tho] dede?
He lete † fetre the Juſtice, &c.

Theſe are ſome of the moſt material amendments that may be made out of theſe mſſ. I doubt not but many more as conſiderable may be made by an exact collation of all the mſſ. wherein this Tale is to be found.

There is very little to be added to what has been ſaid before concerning the other two pieces added in this edition. As they are printed from the ſingle mſ. of Mrs. Thynne the reader is to expect no more than an exact tranſcript from it, which Mr. Ainſworth aſſured me he had made. It may (perhaps with ſome ſhew of reaſon) be ſuſpected that Chaucer was not the author of them, but a later writer, who may have taken the hint from what is ſuggeſted in ver. 796 of the Prologues, that the pilgrims were to tell Tales in their return homewards; but as to that the reader muſt be left to his own judgment. But ſuppoſing they were not writ by our Author, we are however obliged to Mr. Urry's diligence for finding out and publiſhing two ancient poems not unworthy our peruſal; and they have as good a

* *H.* 1, hath theſe verſes thus;
And Sir Ote his brother by hym, and Adam at his fete.

† So it is in *mſ. Ch.*

right to appear at the end of this edition as Lydgate's Story of Thebes had to be printed in former ones.

When the greateſt part of the Tales were printed off there came to my hands another mſ. of The Canterbury Tales which Mr. Urry had not ſeen. It belongs to Charles Cholmondeley Eſq. of Vale-Royal in Cheſhire, whoſe name ſhould be mentioned with particular reſpect for his readineſs in communicating this mſ. without any previous application, as ſoon as he underſtood where a new edition of Chaucer's Works was preparing. It is imperfect at the beginning and in moſt of the Tales, but thoſe of the Frere and Sompnour are entirely loſt. This mſ. hath the Retractation at the end of The Parſon's Tale. Though this was the firſt copy of it which I had ſeen, yet I had an opportunity of collating it with other copies before it went to the preſs, and therefore the reader may expect to find it more complete and correct than any ſingle mſ. repreſents it. The valuableneſs of it will appear by the uſe which has been made of it in the gloſſary. It was indeed deſigned that ſome of the different readings of it ſhould have been ſet down at the bottom of the page in thoſe Tales which were not printed off when I received it, but my direction being miſunderſtood at the preſs ſome of them were inſerted in the text.

A mſ. in octavo, partly written on vellum and partly on paper, containing the five books of Troilus and Creſeide, I found amongſt books and papers left by Mr. Urry, but I could not perceive that he had made any uſe of it. It came not to my hands till a long time after that poem was printed off, but where upon collating I have found any material variations in the reading I have inſerted them in the gloſſary. When I made this uſe of it I did not know to whom it belonged, and therefore quoted it in the manner mentioned a-

bove, becauſe it ſeemed to have once belonged to that learned antiquary Sir Henry Spelman, his name [*Henrici Spelman*] being written in a fair hand on the firſt leaf of it, and at the beginning of other tracts contained in that volume; but I have been ſince informed that it belonged to the late Lord Viſcount Weymouth, from whom it is probable Mr. Urry borrowed it not long before his death, which might be the reaſon that no notice is taken of it in that catalogue he left of the mſſ. which he had ſeen and peruſed.

There is another mſ. of this poem in the [illegible]rd Harley's library, which has been occaſionall[illegible]ted when any difficulty occured in reviſing the g[illegible] and is there meant by *H.* 3.

It may be of uſe in this place to give the reader n[illegible]tice of another mſ. in the Harleian library, [34, *B.* 18,] which though it contains but two ſmall pieces of our Author's, *viz. How Pyte is dede*, &c. and that beginning, *The longe Nyghtis*, &c. it may be worth an editor's while to collate for the many improvements and corrections that may be made from it, eſpecially in the former poem, one of which is obſerved under *Herenus* in the gloſſary, wherein this book is deſigned by *H.* 4.

And it may be equally uſeful to a future editor to be advertiſed that Chaucer's Tale of Melibeus and his wife Prudence may receive conſiderable improvements from a fragment of it at the end of a paper mſ. [N° 140,] in the Arundelian collection belonging to the Royal Society, which is the only mſ. there that contains any of our Author's works. This is mentioned here to prevent any future loſs of time in ſearching amongſt thoſe mſſ. for the continuation of The Squier's Tale, which ſome have pretended to have been complete in Arundel-Houſe library *; nor is it likely the

* *Phillips's Theatrum Poet.* part ii. p. 51.

curious inquirer should be more succesful in his researches elsewhere for the remainder of that Tale, which no doubt was left imperfect by the Author, as it is mentioned in some mss. and in that ms. of Mr. Selden in the Bodl. library [*Archiv. B.* 30, 3360.] After the two verses which we have of the third part of that Tale these eight verses follow;

But I here now wol maken a knotte,
To the tyme it come next to my lotte;
For here ben felawes behynde an hepe truly
That wolden talke full besily,
...ve here sport as well as I,
...ay passith certaynly;
...ore, Oste, taketh now good hede
...shall nexte telle, and late him spede.

...certainly Spenser was of opinion that Chaucer ...er finished it when he undertook to carry on that ...tory, so far at least as it made for his purpose, in his Fairy Queen *, which gave occasion to others to fancy he wrote a continuation of it. That indeed was attempted by one John Lane in Q. Elizabeth's time; how well he succeeded in his performance is left to the judgment of such as have leisure to peruse it in the Ashmolean Museum, N° 6937.—I had likewise the assistance of my friends in collating most of the old and all the valuable *editions*, &c.

* See the passage in the *Testimonies*, vol. xiii.

Mr. William Thynne's Epistle dedicatory to King Henry VIII. before Chaucer's Works.

To the Kinges highnesse, my most gracious soveraigne Lord, Henry VIII. by the grace of God King of England and of France, Defensor of the Faith, and Lord of Ireland, &c.

AMONGES all other excellencies, most gracious soveraine Lord, wherewith almighty God hath endowed mankind above the residue of earthly creatures, as an outward declaration of reason or reasonablenesse wherein consisteth the similitude of man unto angels, and the difference between the same and brute beasts, I verayly suppose that speech or language is not to be reputed amonges the smallest or inferiours, for thereby is expressed the conceit of one to another in open and plaine sentence, which in the residue of lively creatures lacketh, and is not shewed amonges them but by certaine covert and derke signes, and that in few thyngs, having course and operation onely of nature. This speech or language, after the confusion of tongues sent by God's punishment for pride and arrogancie of people, hath been by a certaine instinct and disposition naturall devised and invented in sundrie parts of the world, as fellowships or companyings of folks one with another chaunced, much to the outward expressing of the thing in word or sound, according to that whereof it had meaning or signification; but in processe of time, by diligence or policie of people, after divers formes, figures, and impressions, in metall, barks of trees, and other matter used for memorie and knowledge of thyngs then present or passed, sundry letters or carectes were first amonges the Phenices devised and found, with such knittings and joynings of one to another, by a marvellous subtiltie and craft, as counterveiled was and is equivalent to the same languages, so as the conceit of man's mind,

which at the beginning was ufed to be declared by mouth only, came to fuch point that it was as fenfibly and vively expreffed in writing. Hereupon enfued a great occafion and courage unto them that fhould write to compone and adorne the rudeneffe and barbarietie of fpeech, and to forme it to an eloquent and ordinate perfection, whereunto many, and many great poets and oratours, have highly employed their ftudies and courages, leaving thereby notable renoume of themfelves, and example perpetuell to their pofteritie.

Amonges other the Greekes in all kinds of fciences feemed fo to prevaile, and fo to ornate their tongue, as yet by other of right noble languages cannat be perfitely imitated or followed. The Latines, by example of the Greekes, have gotten or wonne to them no fmall glorie in the forming, order, and uttering, of that tongue; out of the which two, if it be well fearched, that is to fay, Greek and Latin, (though by corruption of fpeech it fhould feem much otherwife) have been derived the refidue of the languages that be written with the letters or carectes of either of them both. But of all fpeeches thofe which moft approach to the Latine be the Italian and Spanifh tongues, of whome the one by the corruption of the Gothes and Longobardes had her beginning, as Latine fpoken by ftrangers of a barbare underftanding; the other, being alfo Latine, was by Vandales, Gothes, Moores, Saracens, and other, fo many times blemifhed, as marveile it is to fee now unto what perfection thefe two formed out of the Latine and Barbare fpeeches be reduced. Next unto them in fimilitude to the Latin is the French tongue, which by diligence of people of the fame is in few years paffed fo amended, as well in pronunciation as in writing, that an Englifhman, by a fmall time exercifed in that tongue, hath not lacked ground to make a gram-

mere or rule ordinarie thereof. Though of trouth (which some shall scarcely believe) the Germanes have so formed the order of their language, that in the same is both as much plentie and as nere concordaunce to the phrase of the Latin as the French tongue hath. And veraily like as all these and the rest have ben thus vigilant and studious to meliorate or amend their languages, so hath there nat lacked amonges us Englishmen which have right well and notably endevored and emploied themselves to the beautifying and bettering of the English tongue.

Amonges whome, most excellent Prince, my most redoubted and gracious soveraigne Lord, I your most humble vassal, subject, and servaunt, William Thynne, Cheef Clerck of your Kechyn, mooved by a certaine inclination and zeale which I have to heare of any thing sounding to the laude and honour of this your noble realme, have taken great delectation, as the tymes and laysers might suffer, to rede and heare the bokes of that noble and famous clerke Geoffray Chaucer, in whose Workes is so manifest comprobation of his excellent learning in all kindes of doctrines and sciences, such fruitfulness in wordes, well accordynge to the matter and purpose, so swete and plesaunt sentences, such perfection in metre, the composition so adapted, such freshness of invention, compendiousnesse in narration, suche sensible and open style, lacking neither majestie ne mediocritie covenable in disposition, and such sharpnesse or quicknesse in conclusyon, that it is much to be marvailed how in hys tyme (when doutlesse all good letters were laide aslepe throughout the world, as the thinge whiche either by the disposition and influence of the bodies above, or by other ordinaunce of God, seemed like and was in daunger to have utterly perished) such an ex-

cellent poet in our tong shuld (as it were Nature repugning) spring and arise. For though it had been in Demosthenes or Homerus times, when all learning and excellencie of sciences flourished amonges the Greeks, or in the season that Cicero, prince of eloquence amonges Latines, lived, yet had it ben a thinge right rare and straunge, and worthy perpetuall laude, that any clerke by learninge or witte coulde then have framed a tonge, before so rude and imperfite, to such a swete ornature and composition; likely, if he had lived in these dayes, beinge good letters so restored and revived as they be (if he were not empeched by the envie of such as may tolerate nothing whyche to understande their capacite doth not extend) to have brought it unto a full and finall perfection.

Wherefore, gracious soveraigne Lord, taking such delight and pleasure in the Workes of this noble clerke (as is afore mentioned) I have of a long season much used to rede and visite the same, and as bookes of divers imprints came unto my hands I easily and without great studie might and have deprehended in them many errours, falsities, and depravations, which evidently appeared by the contrarieties and alterations found by collation of the one with the other, whereby I was moved and stirred to make diligent serch where I might find or recover any true copies or exemplaries of the said bookes; whereunto in processe of time, nat without cost and pain, I attained, and nat onely unto such as seeme to be very true copies of those Workes of Geffrey Chaucer which before had beene put in print, but also to divers others never till nowe imprinted, but remaining almost unknown and in oblivion; whereupon lamenting with my selfe the negligence of the people that have been in this realme,

who doubtlesse were very remisse in the setting forth or avauncement either of the histories thereof, to the great hinderaunce of the renoume of such noble princes and valiant conquerours and captaines as have been in the same, or also of the works of memory of the famous and excellent clerks in all kinds of sciences that have flourished therein (of which both sorts it hath pleased God as highly to nobilitate this isle as any other region of Christendome) I thought it in manere appertenaunt unto my dutie, and that of very honestie and love to my country I ought no lesse to doe, than to put my helping hand to the restauration and bringing againe to light of the said Workes, after the true copies and exemplaries aforesaid; and devising with my self who of al other were most worthy, to whom a thing so excellent and notable should be dedicat, which to my conceit semeth for the admiration, noveltie, and straungenesse, that it might be reputed to be of in the time of the Authour (in comparison as a pure and fine tried precious or polished jewel out of a rude or indigest masse or matere) none could to my thinking occur that since or in the time of Chaucer was or is sufficient but only your Majesty roiall, which by discretion and judgement, as most absolute in wisedome and all kinds of doctrine, could, and of his innate clemencie and goodnesse would, adde or give any authoritie hereunto.

For this cause, most excellent, and in al vertues most prestante Prince, I as humbly prostrate before your kingly estate, lowly supplie and beseech the same that it woll vouchsafe to take in good part my poore studie and desirous minde in reducing unto light this so precious and necessarie an ornament of the tongue of this your realme, over-pitous to have been in any point lost, falsified, or neglected; so that under the shield of

your most royal protection and defence it may goe forth in publick, and prevaile over those that would blemish, deface, and in many things clearely abolish, the laud, renoume, and glorie, heretofore compared and meritoriously adquired by divers princes, and other of this said most noble isle, whereunto nat onely straungers under pretext of high learning and knowledge, of their malicious and perverse mindes, but also some of your owne subjects, blinded in follie and ignoraunce, doe with great studie contend.

Most gracious, victorious, and of God most elect and worthie Prince, my most dread soveraigne Lord, in whom of very merite, dutie, and succession, is renued the glorious title of Defensor of the Christen Faith, which by your noble progenitour, the great Constantine, sometime King of this realme and Emperour of Rome, was next God and his apostles cheefly maintained, corroborate, and defended. Almighty Jesu send to your Highnesse the continuall and everlasting habundaunce of his infinite grace. Amen.

To the Kinges moſt noble Grace, and To the Lords and Knightes of the Garter.

To you, welle of honour and worthineſſe,
Our Chriſten King, the heire and ſucceſſour
Unto Juſtinian's devout tenderneſſe,
In the faith of Jeſu our redemptour;
And to you, Lordis of the Garter, floure
Of chevalrie, as men you clepe and call,
The Lord of vertue and of grace authour
Graunt the fruit of your loſe never appall.

O liege Lorde! that have the likeneſſe
Of Conſtantine, th' enſample and mirrour
To princes all, in humble buxomeneſſe
To holy church, O veray ſuſtainour
And piller of our faith, and werriour
Againe of hereſies the bitter gall,
Doe forth, doe forth, continue your ſuccour,
Hold up Chriſtis banner, let it not fall.

This iſle or this had ben but Hetheneſſe
N'ad be of your faith the force and vigour;
And yet this day the fiendis crabbedneſſe
Wenith fully to catch a time and houre
To have on us your lieges a ſharpe ſhoure,
And to his ſervitude us knitte and thrall;
But aye we truſt in you our protectour,
On your conſtaunce we awaitin all.

Commaundith that no wight have hardineſſe,
O worthy King! our Chriſten emperour,
Of the faith to diſputin more or leſſe
Openly emonges peple: her errour

Springeth all day, and engendrith rumour.
Makith ſuch law, and for ought may befall
Obſerve it wele, thereto be ye doctour:
Doth ſo, and God in glorie ſhall you ſtall.

Ye Lordis eke! ſhining in noble fame,
To which appropred is the maintenaunce
Of Chriſt'is cauſe, in honour of his name,
Shove on and put his foes to utteraunce;
God wolde ſo, and ſo wolde eke your legiaunce;
To the two aye prikith you your dewte.
Who ſo nat kepeth this double obſervaunce
Of merite and honour naked is he.

Your ſtile ſayith [that] ye ben foes to ſhame;
Now kith of your faith the perſeveraunce,
In which an hepe of us ben halt and lame.
Our Chriſten King of Englonde and of Fraunce,
And ye my Lordis with your alliaunce,
And other faithful peple that there be,
Truſt I to God ſhall quench al this noiſance,
And this lond ſet in high proſperite.

Conqueſt of high proweſſe is for to tame
The wild wodeneſſe of all this miſcreaunce;
Right to the rote daily repe ye that ſame.
Slepen nat this, but for God's pleſaunce
And his mother, and in ſignifiaunce
That ye ben of Saint George's livere,
Doth him ſervice and knightly obeiſaunce,
For Chriſtis cauſe is his well knowin ye.

Stiffe ſtand in that, and ye ſhall greve and grame
The foe to pece, the norice of diſtaunce:
That now is erneſt turne it into game;
Now kithe of your beleve the conſtaunce.

Lord leige and Lordis have in remembraunce
Lord of all is the blifsfull Trinite,
Of whofe vertue the mightie habundaunce
You herten and ftrengthen in faithfull unite. 64

Explicit.

Eight goodly Queftions with their Anfwers *.

SOMETIME in Grece, that noble region,
There were eight clerkis of full grete fcience,
Philofophers of notable difcrecion,
Of whom was afked, to provin their prudence,
Eight Queftions of derke intelligence,
To which they anfwered after their entent,
As here doth appere plaine and evident. 7

The firft queftion was, What erthly thing
Is beft and unto God moft commendable?
The firft clerke anfwered without tarying,
A mann'is foule ever firme and ftable
In right, [and] from the trouth not variable;
But now alas! full fore may we wepe,
For covetife hath broughte trouth afleepe. 14

The fecond, What thing is moft odious?
A double man, fayed the philofopher,
With virgine face and a taile venomous,
With a fair view and a falfe profer,
A corrupt carien in a golden tree.

* Septem Sapientum Sententiæ apud Aufon.

Bias Prieneus.

Quænam fumma boni? Mens quæ fibi confcia recti.
Pernicies homini quæ maxima? Solus homo alter.
Quis dives? Qui nil cupiat. Quis pauper? Avarus.
Quæ dos matronæ pulcherrima? Vita pudica.
Quæ cafta eft? De qua mentiri fama veretur.
Quod prudentis opus? Quum poffit, nolle nocere.
Qiud ftulti proprium? Non poffe, et velle nocere.

It is a monſter in natures linage
One man to havin a double viſage.

The third, [queſtion] What is the beſte dower
That may be to a wife appropriate?
A clene life, was the clerkis anſwer,
Without ſinne, all chaſte, and inviolate,
From all deceits and ſpeches inornate,
Or countenaunce which ſhall be to diſpiſe:
No fire make, and then no ſmoke woll ariſe.

The fourth queſtion, [was] What maiden may
Be called clene in chaſtitie?
The fourthe clerke anſwered, Which alway
Every creature is aſhamde on to lie,
Of whom men reporten great honeſtie.
Good maidens kepe youre chaſtitie forth,
And remember that good name is gold worth.

[The fifth] Who' is a pore man ever full of wo?
A covetous man which is a nigon,
He that in his herte can never ſay ho;
The more gode the leſſe diſtribution;
The richer the worſe of condition:
Men in this coaſt clepen him a niggard,
[And] Sir Guy the bribour is his ſteward.

[The ſixth] Which is a rich man without fraud?
He that canne to his gode ſuffiſe;
Whatever he hath he yeveth God the laud,
And kepeth him clene from all covetiſe;
He deſires nothing in ungodly wiſe;
His body is here, his mind is above;
He is a rich man, for God doth him love.

Who is a foole ? is the seventh demand;
He that wolde hurt and hath no powere;
Might he mickell much wolde he command;
His malice grete, his might nought were;
He threteth full fast, full little may he dere:
He thinketh not how men have sayed beforne
God sendeth a shreude cowe a short horne. 56

Who is a wise man ? is the eight question;
He that might noye and doth no annoiance,
Might punish and leaveth punission;
A man mercifull without vengeaunce:
A wise man puttith in rememberaunce
[This] saying, Had I venged all mine harme
My cloke had not been furrid halfe so warme. 63

Explicit.

*Chaucer's Prophecie**.

WHEN faith faylith in priest'is sawes,
And lordis hestes are holde for lawes,
And robberie is holde purchace,
And lecherie is holde solace,
Then shall the lond of Albion
Be brought to great confusion. 6

IT falleth for a gentleman
To say the best that he can
Alwaies in mann'is absence,
And the sooth in his presence. 4

It commeth by kind of gentil blood
To cast away all hevinesse
And gather togither wordis good;
The werke of wisdome beareth witnesse. 8

* So this stanza is entitled in a book in the Ashmolean museum, N° 6986, 781, p. 162.

The Reader to Geffrey Chaucer, prefixed to Speght's edit. of 1602.

READER.

WHERE haſt thou dwelt, good Geffrey, all this while
Unknown to us, ſave only by thy bookes?
CH. In haulks and hearnes, God wot! and in exile,
Where none vouchſaft to yeeld me words or lookes,
Till one which ſaw me there, and knew my friends,
Did bring me forth: ſuch grace ſometime God ſends.
READ. But who is he that hath thy bookes repair'd,
And added moe, whereby thou art more graced?
CH. The ſelfe ſame man who hath no labor ſpar'd
To helpe what time and writers had defaced,
And made old words, which were unknown of many,
So plaine that now they may be known of any.
READ. Well fare his heart: I love him for thy ſake,
Who for thy ſake hath taken all this pains.
CH. Would God I knew ſome means amends to make,
That for his toile he might receive ſome gains.
But wot ye what? I know his kindneſſe ſuch
That for my good he thinks no pains too much.

H. B.

Upon the picture of Chaucer, prefixed to Speght's edit. of 1602.

WHAT Pallas' citie owes the heav'nly mind
Of prudent Socrates, wiſe Greece's glorie,
What fame Arpinas ſpreadingly doth find
By Tullie's eloquence and oratorie,
What laſting praiſe ſharpe witted Italie
By Taſſo's and by Petrarke's penne obtained,
What fame Bartas unto proud France hath gained,
By Seven Daies world poetically ſtrained;

What high renoune is purchas'd unto Spaine,
Which freſh Dianaes verſes do diſtill,
What praiſe our neighbour Scotland doth retaine
By Gawine Douglas in his Virgill quill,
Or other motions by ſweet poets ſkill,
The ſame, and more, faire England challenge may
By that rare wit and art thou doeſt diſplay
In verſe, which doth Apolloes Muſe bewray:
Then Chaucer live, for ſtill thy verſe ſhall live
T' unborne poets, which life and light will give.

FRAN. THYNNE.

See Teſtimonies of learned men concerning Chaucer and his Works, vol. xiii.

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